National Library of Canada
Canadian Theses Service
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Services des thèses canadiennes

CANADIAN THESES

THÈSES CANADIENNES

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

Canada

NL 339 (r. 86/01)

255

0-315-26986-3

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Division
Division des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

PERMISSION TO MICROFILM — AUTORISATION DE MICROFILMER

• Please print or type — Écrire en lettres moulées ou dactylographier

Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

Nakonechny Geraldine Marie

Date of Birth — Date de naissance	Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance
May 7, 1939	Canada

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

9528-142 ave Edmonton, Alberta T5E 6A5

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

Factors Related to Non-Completion of Distance Learning Post R.N. Certificate Program

University — Université

University of Alberta

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

M. Ed.

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
1983	Dr. K. P. Puffer

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

Date	Signature
October 14/83	Geraldine Marie Nakonechny

NL-91 (4/77)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACTORS RELATED TO NON-COMPLETION OF DISTANCE LEARNING POST R. N. CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

by

GERALDINE MARIE NAKONECHNY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF

GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1983

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR	Geraldine Marie Nakonechny
TITLE OF THESIS	Factors Related To Non-Completion of Distance Learning Post R. N. Certificate Program.
DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED	Master of Education
YEAR THIS DEGREE WAS GRANTED	1983

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

(Signed) Geraldine Marie Nakonechny

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

9528 - 142 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta

T5E 6A5

DATED: October 6, 1983

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Factors Related To Non-completion of Distance Learning Post R.N. Certificate program" submitted by Geraldine Marie Nakonechny in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

K. Puffer

Dr. Karel Puffer
Supervisor

Darius Young

Dr. Darius Young

Grace Tannahill

Prof. Grace Tannahill

W Collin

Dr. Wilbur Collin

Date: October 6, 1983

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to identify factors associated with non-completion of the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program. A secondary purpose was to identify factors which facilitated completion of individual courses within the program.

The data were collected by mailed questionnaire from 70 respondents who had been enrolled in the program between May 1980 and June 1982, but who did not continue registration in the program.

The following is a summary of the major findings:

1. All respondents were female between the age of 25 and 60 years of age. The median age was 42 years. Three-fourths were Alberta residents with one-fourth living within the immediate Edmonton area. Ten percent had a baccalaureate education.

2. Three-fourths (76%) had children under the age of 18 living in the home. Of these, 31% had no other adults residing in the household. The average number of residents per household was 2.54, although it varied from no additional members to 7 others residing in the same household.

3. The majority (65%) of respondents were employed on a full-time basis outside the home. Most (78%) worked in direct patient care roles in Extended Care facilities (48%).

4. Registration in the program was the first learning experience attempted in many years by 20%. Although the majority (52%) intended to complete the entire program, 41% were uncertain while 7% had no intention of completion.

5. For 37%, the decision to enroll was a personal decision. Fellow health care workers and fellow learners were a supportive inspiration for 32% while family members were providers of support to 19%.

6. The major reason for registering in the program was the desire to provide better care. A large number (77%) were influenced

by the fact that they had an opportunity to continue employment while taking a course.

7. The majority of respondents felt that the course descriptions were accurate, the course content was interesting and the amount of material covered was reasonable. That the course content consisted of mostly new materials was expressed by 22%. Almost two-thirds (66%) felt that there was some new material while 12% felt that there was little or no new material. Slightly more than half occassionally experienced difficulty in understanding course materials.

8. The majority felt that course(s) were relevant to their job.

9. The two major program related concerns were: completing the course(s) in the time frame given and completing assignments.

10. Also causing concern or worry to some respondents were factors related to: study methods or habits, delay in shipment of materials and assignments, and obtaining clients or completing client assignments.

11. Respondents were generally satisfied with information received from college personnel.

12. Respondents generally received little support from others during the duration of the course. Forty-eight percent had no interaction with other students.

13. Most respondents preferred to commence courses in the fall. A total of 51% indicated intent to continue in the program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several people have made significant contributions to this thesis. I am especially indebted to Dr. Karel Puffer, my supervisor, for his continuing guidance in my program of studies and throughout the research and reporting period of this thesis. I wish to thank the committee members, Dr. Darius Young, Dr. W. Collin and Professor Grace Tannahill, for their cooperation and constructive suggestions.

Acknowledgement and appreciation is extended to Mrs. Pat Wilson for her advice and assistance in the preparation of the research instrument and to Mrs. Rosemarie Kneubuhler and the Research, Development and Evaluation Department Grant MacEwan Community College for assisting with the data analyses. Sincere thanks to Carol Gregory for typing this thesis.

A special thank you is due to the former students of the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program at Grant MacEwan Community College who willingly cooperated in the study.

Finally I wish to express my gratitude to my husband Victor for his support and encouragement during all my studies and to our children Lorne and Gregory for their infinite patience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	THE PROBLEM	1
	Introduction	1
	Statement of the Problem	3
	Significance of the Study	3
	Definition of Terms	4
	Delimitations	5
II	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	6
	Characteristics of the Adult Learner	7
	Self Directed	7
	Past Experience	8
	Occupational Orientation	9
	Problem Centered Orientation	10
	Laws of Learning	10
	Law of Effect	11
	Law of Exercise	12
	Law of Readiness	12
	Belongingness	13
	Secondary Concepts	13
	Change in Adult Years	14
	Power-Load-Margin Theory	14
	Critical Events	14
	Commitment	15
	Time Perception	16

Chapter

Page

Ability to learn (intelligence) .. 16

Basic Hierarchy of Needs 17

Hierarchy of Educational Needs 18

Human and Personal Factors Affecting Participation 20

Motives for Learning 20

Typologies of Learners 20

Change as a Motivating Agent 21

Age as a Motivating Factor 22

Supportive Services 23

Instructional Factors in Distance Learning 26

Process of Learning at a Distance. 26

Instructional Design 28

Role of the Tutor 31

Establishing a Communication Network 33

Telecommunications 33

Scheduling Group Classes or Seminars 35

Written Communication 35

Role of Peers and Significant Others 36

Role of Counselling Services 37

Reasons for Non-Completion 38

Measurement of Attrition 39

Chapter

Page

III METHODOLOGY 43

Instrumentation 43

Assumptions 45

Population 45

Sample 46

Validation 46

Collection of Data 47

Data Analyses 47

Summary 48

IV ANALYSES OF DATA 49

Personal Information 50

Geographic Location 50

Sex 50

Age of Respondents 50

Student Status 51

Educational Preparation 52

Number of People Living In Household 53

Employment While Enrolled In Program 56

Type of Employment Facility 57

Type of Work 58

Pre-Registration Experience And Intent 60

Chapter

Page

Recency of Participation in Learning Activities 59

Intent to Complete Program 60

Provider of Greatest Support 61

Reasons for Registering 62

Necessary Change in Routine 65

Satisfaction With Course Content, Delivery System and Staff 66

Description of Course Content 66

Amount of Content 67

Content Course Appeal 68

Amount of New Material 69

Relevance of Content to Job 69

Difficulty in Understanding Course Materials 70

Textbook Rating 71

Program Aspects Causing Concern .. 72

Support Systems 80

Assistance From Significant Others 80

Interaction With Other Students .. 83

Intent to Continue In Program 84

Reasons For Not Continuing in Program . 88

Feeling About Home Study 91

Chapter

Page

V FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS 92

Findings and Implications 92

Personal Information 92

Pre-Registration, Experience, Intent and Preparation 94

Satisfaction With Course Content, Delivery Systems and Staff 95

Support Systems 98

Reasons for Not Continuing 99

Summary and Recommendations 100

The Problem 100

Population and Sample of the Study 100

Data Collection and Analyses 100

Generalizability 101

Recommendations 101

Personal Characteristics 102

Pre-Registration Intent 103

Satisfaction With Course Content, Delivery System and Staff 103

Support Systems 105

Reasons For Not Continuing In the Program 106

Recommendations For Further Study 108

Chapter

Page

BIBLIOGRAPHY 109

APPENDIX A The Questionnaire, Covering Letter, Reminder Letter 116

APPENDIX B Verbatim Responses To Open-Ended Question No. 26 126

VITA 130

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Geographic Location	50
2	Age at Time of Response	51
3	Student Status	52
4	Educational Preparation	52
5	Age 5 Years and Under	53
6	Age 6 - 12 Years	54
7	Age 13 - 18 Years	54
8	Age 19 - 30 Years	54
9	Age 31 - 60 Years	55
10	People Over 60 Years	55
11	Number of Residents Per Household Excluding Respondent	56
12	Employment While Enrolled	57
13	Type of Institutions Worked For	58
14	Type of Work Done	59
15	Intent to Complete Program	60
16	Greatest Supportive Inspiration	62
17	Reasons For Registering In Program	63
	A Major Influence	63
	B Some Influence	64
	C No Influence	64
18	Major Change Necessary	66

Table		Page
19	Accuracy of Course Description	67
20	Amount of Content	68
21	Course Content Interesting	68
22	Amount of New Material	69
23	Relevance of Content	70
24	Difficulty In Understanding Material	71
25	Textbook Rating	71
26	Program Aspects Causing Concern	75
	A Major Concern	75
	B Some Concern	76
	C No Concern	76
27	Satisfaction With Information From College Staff	77
28	Most Helpful Information Received	78
29	Assistance From Significant Others	81
	A Much Assistance	82
	B Some Assistance	82
	C No Assistance	82
	D Discouraged	83
30	Interaction With Other Students	84
31	Intent to Enroll In Another Course	85
32	Preferred Commencement	86
33	Alternate Commencement Choice	86

Table		Page
34	Reasons For Not Continuing	88
	A Major Reasons	88
	B Some Reasons	89
	C No Reasons	90

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Hierarchy of Educational Needs	19

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program at Grant MacEwan Community College is a distance learning program designed to provide registered nurses with specialized expertise for working with the aged and disabled. The program is one year in length for students registered in full time study. A certificate can also be achieved through part time study within a four year period. The majority of learners to date have been part time registrants. Instruction in all courses is achieved through the use of print materials and telephone communication. In two courses an optional workshop is scheduled and both courses have supplementary audio-visual material available to the student, upon request.

Course and program retention is a concern shared by all educators. Shale (1982) implies that the problem may even be more serious in higher distance education settings. The identification of factors contributing to the non-completion of courses, and the

lack of registration in subsequent courses, is the initial step in the planning for the resolution of the drop-out problem.

A general overview of registrants in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program, revealed two groups of students: those who completed one or more courses in the program and were continuing registration in subsequent courses; a second group who registered in at least one course but were not continuing in the program. In this latter category were individuals who withdrew before completion of a course, others who didn't complete and were not heard from, as well as those who successfully completed one or more courses.

This thesis describes those students who were enrolled in Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program courses between May, 1980 and June, 1982 but who did not continue registration in the program. Factors which contributed to both the completion and non-completion of courses during this period are identified.

Statement of the Problem

The major purpose of this study was to identify factors associated with non-completion of the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program. A related purpose was the identification of factors which made a significant contribution to the completion of courses in this program.

The major objectives of the study were to identify the following:

1. Major reasons for withdrawal from distance learning courses.
2. Variables contributing to withdrawal.
3. Demographic characteristics of the drop-out.
4. Components of the program with which students were satisfied or dissatisfied.

Significance of the Study

Knowledge of the students' reasons for persistence in the program, or reasons for discontinuation, facilitates a better understanding of the student's needs and whether they have been met.

The study identifies important characteristics of the learners who did not continue in

the program. Acquisition of such information facilitates the development of counter-active or supportive measures and can improve future programming.

It is acknowledged that the method of delivery may not be suitable for all who enrolled. The study attempts to identify factors related to the delivery mode which contributed to drop-out.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were selected for terms that were used throughout the study.

Distance learning - refers to correspondence study utilizing primarily print materials, but may be supplemented by audio or visual technologies and workshops.

Drop-out - not registered in a program course for at least one year.

Evidence of commencement - completion of at least one assignment.

Immediate Edmonton area - the City of Edmonton and a radius of 40 kilometers.

Non-starter - is a student who registered in a

course, received materials, but did not complete any assignments.

Stay-ins - those who register in a course at least yearly.

Tutor - is the individual who fulfills the instructional role in distance learning either through written or telephone communication.

Delimitations

The study is limited in the following ways:

1. The sample includes only a specific group of students within the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program - those registered between May, 1980 and June, 1982, but who have not continued registration in the program.

2. The study addresses only factors which can be influenced by the College, the student, and the student's family or significant others.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature focuses on two areas considered to be basic to the studying of a group of adult learners who are no longer continuing in a program they commenced. First, the literature associated with the adult learner was considered. The components of this part have been identified as the characteristics of the adult learner; general laws of learning; changes in adult years; basic needs, and educational needs. Human and personal factors affecting participation in learning activities are discussed next. The third section focuses on the particular needs of the adult learner at a distance and the reasons for non-continuation in distance learning programs.

THE ADULT LEARNER

Characteristics of the Adult Learner

Self-Directed

The major assumption of andragogy as discussed by Malcolm Knowles (1979) is that as a person matures, his self-concept moves from a state of dependence to a state of increasing self-directed advancement. Those who enter a professional school or commence a career are already identified with the adult role and have a deep psychological need to be perceived as self-directing. Should the adult not be allowed to be self-directing, resentment and resistance will prevail and interfere with learning.

Authorities agree that self-directed learning is a necessary feature of adult education. "Dewey identified self-direction in education as 'the true growth of individuals'" (Burns, 1980, p. 34). Whitehead (1964) reaffirmed this view when he stated that "the purpose of education is to stimulate and guide their self-development" (p. 9). Rogers (1960) states, "I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated" (p. 153).

The learner, however, needs the opportunity to learn the skills of self-direction (Burns, 1980). Intentional structuring of initial learning experiences to assist the learner acquire the skills of self direction, has been termed front-end loading (Burns, 1980). To acquire self-direction, the learner initially should have structured and supervised experiences in learning independently (Knowles, 1974).

The role of the instructor is to provide the necessary support in the transition from dependence to independence. The instructor serves as a facilitator of self-directed learning (Rogers, 1960). Burns concludes that operationalizing front-end loading will reduce learner frustration, increase learner self-confidence and will provide positive reinforcement necessary in shaping the self-directed behavior.

Past Experience

The second assumption is that as a person matures he acquires a reservoir of knowledge from his many past experiences. New learning should be built upon these unique experiences. This emphasizes the need for individualized learning. If life experiences are ignored or devalued, the adult takes it personally and feels rejected as a person (Knowles, 1979).

On the other hand prior learning can interfere with present learning. When new material is similar to previously learned material, the previous learning may impede new learning. The learner must go through a process of unlearning before new material can be mastered.

Occupational Orientation

The third assumption of andragogy is that biological development is complete and the adult is motivated to learn tasks related to occupational or social roles. Adults are ready to learn the things they need to know and learning experiences should coincide with their learning needs (Knowles, 1975). Stages of pedagogical education are determined by biological development and social and academic pressures to prepare for future roles. In contrast, Briggs (1982) reports that "adults become ready to learn as the roles which they were beginning to fulfill required them to do so" (p. 19). Matching the learning experience to the adult learner's perceived need implies that practical experience should precede course-work (Briggs, 1982).

It is important that individual differences among students be recognized. Not only will students

have different past experiences and interests, but they will also learn at varying rates.

Problem Centered Orientation

The final assumption of andragogy is that adults have a problem centered orientation toward learning and desire immediate application of things learned. Immediate application is crucial to retention of material learned. Adult learners need the opportunity to have learning sequenced as follows: field experience, theory, practical application (Briggs, 1982).

The adult learner learns and retains new material better if the material is perceived as being meaningful. Meaningfulness is usually achieved when a relationship can be shown between previous learning, and the goals and objectives of the new learning experience, or when the practical application can be demonstrated. The learner should be encouraged to plan his own educational activities, while the teacher takes the role of resource person and facilitator.

The Laws of Learning

An understanding of adult learning is facilitated by a review of basic psychological laws

which affect all learning. Some of the first Laws of Learning which included the laws of Similarity, Contrast, Contiguity and Frequency, were formulated by Aristotle.

He believed that an object was more likely to be remembered if it was similar to the one recalled, in contrast to the one recalled, or along side the one recalled. He also believed that when experiences frequently occur together, the recall of one is likely to stimulate the recall of another (Hergenhahn, 1976).

Later Thorndike formulated three major laws: effect, exercise and readiness. In his work after 1930 he also included belongingness as a concept. Secondary concepts formulated by Thorndike included multiple response, set or attitude, prepotency of elements, response by analogy and associative shifting.

Law Of Effect

Thorndike as reported by Hergenhahn (1976) stated that "a response followed by a satisfying state of affairs was strengthened" (p. 74). The implication is that the learner who experiences success and personal satisfaction from a learning activity will be motivated to continue and is likely to enroll in more

courses. It is important that students experience some measure of success as they work through new concepts. Equally important is that the learning experience be an enjoyable one because people tend to accept and repeat pleasant happenings.

Described by Hergenhahn (1976) is another related Thorndike concept called spread of effect. Not only does the rewarded response have an increased probability of recurring, but so do responses surrounding the rewarded response have an increased probability of recurring. The closer the response is to the rewarded one, the more likely it is to occur.

Law Of Exercise

Hergenhahn (1976) further reports that although Thorndike revised his original law of exercise in which he stated that repetition strengthened a connection, "Thorndike still maintained that practice led to minor improvement and that lack of practice led to slight forgetting". (p. 72).

Law Of Readiness

Thorndike believed that the learner must be ready or prepared to commence a learning experience. The learner must have a mind "set" toward the learning

experience. Adult learners, however, usually enter a learning experience only after they have internally formulated such a state of preparedness.

Belongingness

Thorndike believed that the forming of connections required more than contiguity. He found that subjects and words that belonged together, were more readily remembered. Thus, learning situations could be structured to influence what is learned and retained.

Secondary Thorndike Concepts

Multiple responses refers to mans nature to try another response if one does not work. Thorndike believed that every learner brought to the learning situation his total background. Thus, individual differences in learning can be partly explained by these different backgrounds. Thorndike further recognized that humans respond selectively to environmental elements and that responses to an unfamiliar situation are determined by the extent of similarity to a previous situation. Learning can also occur through association shifting. Transfer occurs from one stimulus to another. This is done by gradually introducing the new stimulus within the framework of the original stimulus.

Change in Adult Years

Power-Load-Margin Theory

Howard McClusky (1979) developed the concept of load, power, margin. He defined load as the demands made on a person, either by himself or by society. Power includes all the resources one has, including abilities, position and possessions. Margin is the power available to a person over and beyond that required to handle the load. Thus, only when the power is greater than the load, is the person likely to be able to undertake learning activities successfully. McClusky "holds that by realigning and transvaluing the relationship of load to power, the later years may in fact be a period of progressive growth" (p. 156).

Critical Events

McClusky believes that some of the most meaningful learning can occur when one is confronted with a critical event. The time prior to, in between, or following critical events is defined as the "critical period". Changes in marital status, employment, loss of job, death of loved ones are all examples of critical events. These major life transitions and the departure of children thus creating

an empty nest syndrome, can all be examples of critical events which can motivate adult learning. (Holt, 1982).

Commitment

There are two components of the definition of commitment. McClusky (1979) states that "one is intentional attachment and the other a responsibility unique to adulthood as its object" (p. 159). Commitment is non-existent in childhood but begins to appear in a diffused manner in the adolescent. As the years progress commitments become more binding until finally in adulthood they are completely binding. Work, family, aging parents are examples of binding obligations. With increasing age there is disengagement of some commitments but an increase in others.

The resistance to change and to learning of new things, characteristic of the adult could be a result of the inability to relinquish basic commitments. Educational leaves with pay, family expense allowance and flexible scheduling are ways in which society could free the adult from some of those commitments and allow return to learning.

Time Perception

Time is perceived differently with the progression of adult years. At about age thirty, the young adult becomes aware that time is not unlimited. Whether the adult is behind, on schedule, or ahead of schedule with respect to life expectations, may affect the willingness to pursue a program of learning.

The Ability To Learn (Intelligence)

Cross-sectional studies of intelligence present a picture of gradual decline following a peak in the mid-twenties. Longitudinal studies on the other hand, consistently do not support the decline in intelligence with age. McClusky (1979) reports that Lorge noted that there was not a decline in the "power to react" but a "decline in the speed of the reaction" (p. 159).

McClusky (1979) states that a decline in intelligence in adult years can be challenged on the basis of repeatable empirical data. These same cross-sectional studies when repeated some years later have demonstrated an increase in the educational level of the population, indicating that the general environment was indeed more educative. It is known that older persons have less formal education. These cross

sectional studies could reflect a decline in the amount of education rather than in the ability to learn.

Basic Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1970) has identified seven basic human needs, arranged in hierarchical form. They are:

aesthetic needs
desire to know and understand
self-actualization
esteem
love and belonging
safety
physiological

Such a heirarchical arrangement is effective in demonstrating two underlying assumptions. One is that man has inner core inclinations or tendencies which can be realized, shaped or supressed by environment, culture, learning and other factors. However, this inner core is dynamic in nature because in spite of opposing forces, man possesses the fundamental urge to grow, to better himself, to move toward self-actualization. The second assumption of the hierarchical ladder is that lower level needs must be sufficiently satisfied before the individual can function at higher levels. The significant implication

for eductors is that learning can not take place unless lower level needs are met first.

According to both Maslow and Boshier, man's behavior is motivated by both growth and deficiency needs (Ceschi-Smith & Waldron, 1983). Physiological safety, and love requirements are all instigators of deficiency motivated behavior. On the other hand, self-esteem and self-fulfillment are associated with growth motivated behavior.

Hierarchy of Educational Needs

Based on McClusky's Power-Load-Margin theory, Main (1979) described a hierarchy of educational needs (Figure 1). The first block denotes coping needs. Man seeks an education initially to become economically self-sufficient. He may see his education as contributing toward his health, leisure time and personal relationships. Part of the coping mechanism involves the selection of housing and making legal decisions.

Once the coping needs are satisfied man has a reservoir of unexpressed talents, "which if properly cultivated could be activated to enrich one's living" (Main, 1979, p. 26). The contributive need reflects

man's desire to be of service to others. He wants to share the knowledge and experience accumulated.

This is followed by the desire to influence, to effect change. Man's ultimate educational goal is transcendence. At this level, he feels a sense of fulfillment. He can "live with meaning, generously and unselfishly" (Main, 1979, p. 26).

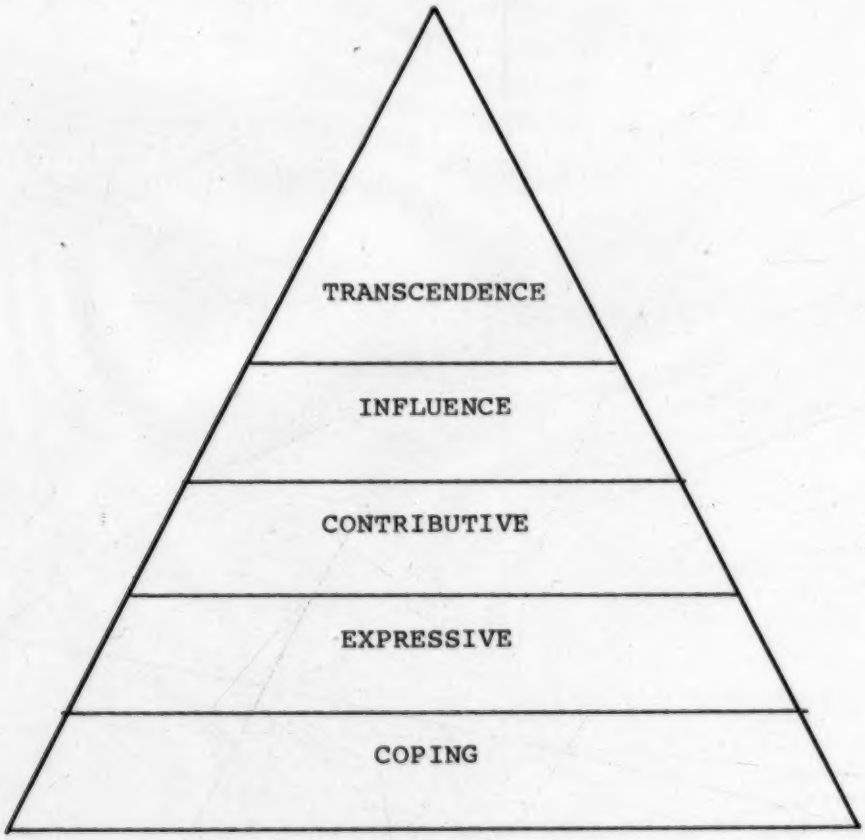

FIGURE 1

HIERARCHY OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

HUMAN AND PERSONAL FACTORS AFFECTING PARTICIPATION

Motives for Learning

Enquiry into the motives for study among adult learners was undertaken as early as 1933 by Joseph Denzil Hoy of the University of Birmingham. Hoy's participants were adult evening students. Forty three percent stated that their main reason for attending was the desire for knowledge, education and general improvement. Thirty one percent attended for examination purposes or business reasons. The remaining categories scoring 10% and less were: interest in study, usefulness, for leisure and social reasons. Hoy's findings correlated closely with those of the Johnstone and Rivera study done some thirty years later in America. Other early studies identified singular reasons for adult participation (Courtney, 1981).

Typologies of Learners

Cyril Houle in 1961 reported collective reasons for participation and grouped them into three typologies. The first typology, the goal oriented learner, enters an educational experience with clear

cut goals and objectives, and directs the learning activity toward a particular interest or need. The activity oriented learner, finds meaning in the learning activity and may take a variety of courses which have no connection with each other. The learning activity provides a social relationship for this learner. The third typology, the learning oriented group, seek learning for its own sake.

Significant in Houle's findings is that participants experienced most of the motivational elements but differed in the degree to which any one element predominated. Houle's typology has survived the tests of Sheffield, Burgess, and Boshier (Courtney, 1981). Although these subsequent researchers have identified original and unique groupings, none has disputed Houle's typology. To the reader, similarities are indeed evident.

Change as a Motivating Agent

Aslanian and Bricknell (Waniewicz, 1982) found that eighty three percent of adult learners returned because of some major change in their lives. Only seventeen percent participated in learning for its own sake. Forty-six percent of the sample studied expressed career related needs as their reason for

seeking learning. This data coincides with Waniewicz's study of the part-time learner in Ontario. Houle (1980) believes that professionals enrolled in continuing education are usually interested in advancing their present job and have a narrower range of interests than non-professionals. Sovie as reported by Houle (1980) stated that in a study of 237 staff nurses, he identified eight basic orientations of nurses which lead to their participation in continuing education. The orientations identified were:

1) learning
2) personal goals
3) professional goal
4) occupational goal
5) societal goal
6) goal fulfillment
7) personal sociability
8) professional sociability

Bevis as reported by Houle (1980) showed "that nurses with a dominant service component were more likely to engage in continuing education, than those who held other role conceptions" (p. 148).

Age as a Motivating Factor

Levinson (1978) and Havighurst (1952) both subdivided the adult learner into age categories. They found that reasons for participation varied among the different age groups but agreed generally that adult learners were occupation oriented and persued learning because of a need to acquire credentials which in turn could mean career advancement and greater financial returns. Houle and Boshier both agreed that age was a major determinant of reasons for participation. Adults who were occupation oriented participated as a means of meeting both growth and deficiency needs. Nearly all had deficiency in educational credentials. Participation in education was perceived to be a way to build knowledge and skills, thereby facilitating occupational advancement.

Supportive Services

Post-secondary education is becoming increasingly more accessible to the adult learner in Canada. The mere availability of programs will not necessarily meet the learning needs of our population. To provide optimum conditions for learning, adult

educators must be cognizant of the need for effective supportive services which Haywood (1977) believes can be accomplished through effective counselling services. Haywood reports that in a study of adults enrolled in continuing education credit courses at Pennsylvania State University, the most desired counselling services were of an educational, administrative nature such as course selection, requirements of the institution and assistance with career-plans. The findings were confirmed by Geisler and Thrush who conducted a similar study on adult women attending the University of Wisconsin, and Mackay who conducted a study on mature female students at University of Madison. Both studies found that personal matters, financial counselling, and study skills assistance, were of lesser concern to the adult learner.

Adult learners generally lack self-confidence in their ability to learn. They have unrealistic expectations for their progress and can be faced with additional obstacles such as "insufficient study skills, time pressures, fear of failure, scheduling problems, isolation from one's peers, and personal problems related to family roles" (Haywood, 1977, p.

37). Others feel they are too old to learn, or because of their past failure, lack confidence in their abilities. Haywood (1977) further reports that studies by Fay (1964) and Kublen (1963), found that the older learners experienced more emotional stress than did younger students, because of their lack of self-confidence.

With the many pressures at hand, optimum learning can occur only if necessary student supportive services are provided.

In a study of returning women students done by Gutmann, Greeves, and Griffin (Holt, 1982), women were found to adopt a more masculine, assertive stance with age. Those who restricted this emerging assertiveness suffered from low self-esteem and depression. Additional findings were that the returning women students were excessively serious students, driven to high achievement and rigorous self-expectations. They saw the return to learning as the last chance for professional and personal growth and were bitter if the programs did not meet their expectations and standards.

INSTRUCTIONAL FACTORS IN DISTANCE LEARNING

Process of Learning at a Distance

In his study of adult self teaching projects, Tough (1964) considered correspondence study to be a form of self-teaching because in correspondence study the adult is largely on his own throughout the entire learning process. Planning, organization, decision making and motivation are all responsibilities assumed by the learner. The adult who participates in self-teaching must perform twelve separate tasks before a learning project is complete. The tasks identified by Tough are:

1. locate a suitable place for learning
2. make necessary financial arrangements to access the course and related materials
3. decide on the most appropriate times for learning and the length of time to be spent
4. identify the goal to be achieved
5. decide how to achieve the identified goal
6. make necessary contacts and obtain the resource materials necessary to commence the learning task

7. deal with ambivalence about achieving the goal

8. deal with tasks which are not particularily pleasant but are an essential component of the learning process

9. deal with doubts about accomplishing the goal

10. estimate past, present or desired level of knowledge and skill

11. deal with difficulty in understanding certain material to be learned

12. decide what to do after the goal has been reached.

Tough further identified in his study that many self-teachers obtained assistance from a variety of individuals and that this assistance greatly influenced their progress. Some received motivating comments from associates without intentionally seeking such reinforcement. To be able to appropriately assist the self-teacher, investigation into what facilitates the self-teaching project, is a topic for continuing research.

Instructional Design

Print materials are the dominant mode of instruction in distance learning. Print materials give the learner the flexibility to work according to an individualized schedule and at a self-determined pace. Sending materials at regular intervals contributes to the activeness of the learning process. MacKenzie (1975) recommends that materials follow an attractive style with well designed diagrams. Color, type of print and layout are details which can contribute to the aesthetic quality of the learning package.

Material to be learned should be divided into manageable units. Each unit should give complete and clear directions incorporating both reference material and teacher explanation. Objectives should be clearly defined and the unit should contain practical exercises. Holmberg (1977) believes that distance learners can indeed be motivated by activities within the print materials such as exercises, specific problems with solutions, making summary notes and other such activities.

Finkel (1982) reports that course design can affect completion rate. He states the example that the highest retainment rate at Athabasca University is in history courses. The reason for this, according to Finkel is the development of interesting courses with the adult in mind. The key to course content in adult education is relevance. Thus rather than expecting students to memorize a list of historians or historical facts, "questions about the past that were also of interest in the present were raised" (p. 95). In an economics class a suggested approach would be to "begin with the economic facts that most people know; inflation, unemployment, poverty, wealth, etc" (p. 95).

The development of instructional materials must be done in the context of the entire instructional system. Hergenhahn (1976) acknowledges the trend toward individualizing instruction and learning. An individualized system of learning "allows students freedom in four areas:

1. When and where to study, through self pacing in private study.

2. How to study through different methods and media.

3. How to study, through choice of content.

4. How to be assessed through the offer of several assessment methods" (Elton, 1980, p. 95).

Although allowing a student to self-pace is advocated in a personalized system of instruction, many studies as noted by Coldeway (1982) report high withdrawal and drop-out rates in self-paced home study courses. Experimentation with a paced package learning format demonstrated a higher completion rate than the self-paced format (Spencer, 1980). Fixed starting and completion dates also result in higher completion rates (Crawford, 1980).

Lloyd and Jacobi (1980) experimented with self-pacing and self-monitoring. A combination of initial instructor guidance and directions for self-monitoring, combined with self-pacing resulted in a greater number of students taking their tests. In addition to decreasing withdrawals, this method also reduced "scalloping" a term which refers to the process of doing all course work in the final weeks of a course. It appears that allowing the student some flexibility within specific parameters may be the most successful approach to use.

Role of the Tutor

Effective instructor-student interactions can facilitate the learning process (Knowles, 1975). In distance education, it is the tutor who interacts with the students and facilitates the learning process. The tutor, also serves a significant motivational function through written, telephone or face to face contact (Holmberg, 1974). That the tutor/counsellor role in distance education overlap is generally agreed upon. However, the "right mixture of interaction and interaction and independence" is essential (Daniel & Marquis, 1979).

Elton (1980) emphasizes that the process "which leads to the student eventually becoming independent of the teacher requires the teacher's guidance if it is to be successful" (p. 95). A common educational aim of both a personalized system of instruction and distance learning is the attempt to move the learner from dependence on the teacher, through a stage of independence, toward a stage of interdependence with others (Elton, 1980).

In an evaluation conducted on another distance education course at Grant MacEwan Community College, the Nursing Refresher program, students rated the most important tutor function as giving feedback on examinations. Fifty five percent of the students felt that motivating or pacing students was of little importance and 61% felt that telephoning to check on progress was not essential. It is significant to note that greater tutor involvement with students does not necessarily improve student completion rates (Coldeway, 1980b). Yet, Wilson (1968) reports measurable completion rates when telephone and other methods of personal contact with correspondence students were employed.

Another study conducted at Athabasca University to determine the effects of tutor training in interpersonal skills revealed "that students performed better when their tutor had received training in interpersonal skills" (Coldeway, 1982, p. 32).

At Vermont State College, the student/mentor relationship is operational (MacKenzie, 1975). Here, faculty members focus on the learning needs of each learner rather than exclusively on curriculum issues.

They assist the learner to clarify values and establish realistic goals. Diagnosis of appropriate learning style and the developmental stages of the learner are done to provide individualized assistance.

Establishing A Communication Network

Distance education, by its definition implies that learning takes place without the traditional face-to-face contact of a classroom. The learner is removed by distance from the administrative, educational, and supportive service provided by the educational institution, yet somehow the communication network must be maintained.

Telecommunications

Wilson (1968) reports that the telephone and other methods of personal contact with students at a distance, results in measurable improvements in completion rates. The telephone is used with success by a great number of distance learning institutions. Telephone contact can be of a telephone conference type, or individual calls initiated by tutor or

student. Conference calls have the advantage of facilitating pacing, and giving students an opportunity to interact with peers. The greatest disadvantages of conference calls are that they must be scheduled for a specific time, thus limiting participtionof some. Conference calls are also an expensive method of communicating with students as compared to individual phone contact (Orton, 1978).

Daniel and Marquis (1979) on the other hand present an opposing view. They report that the Open University has turned to teleconferencing to link counsellors and isolated students in groups of five or six. As compared to face-to-face meetings, the telephone interaction was less expensive. A significant issue was that drop-outs in telephone groups were few.

Audio and video tapes are also a means of making teaching/learning more personal. At the University of Waterloo, the tutor will provide feedback to the class as a whole on an audio tape. This gives the student an opportunity to interact directly with other learners, since he listens to feedback directed

to others not just himself (Leslie, 1979). Computer managed learning or computer assisted learning systems also present a personalized dimension to distance learning.

Scheduling Group Classes Or Seminars

Although some literature reports that direct contact with students by way of seminars or other learning center activities facilitates the learning process, this has not clearly been substantiated (Coldeway, 1982). MacKenzie (1975) reports a 9% drop-out rate from the British Open University when a compulsory attendance period was instituted.

Written Communication

From the report of a study of student reactions to tutor comments on assignments (MacKenzie, 1975) one can conclude that tutor comments are of significant value to the student. Students do however, require a quick turn-around time or the impact of comments will be reduced if feedback is delayed.

Students found delayed feedback frustrating. Their other reported difficulty was tutor inconsistencies when more than one tutor was involved in a course.

Another supportive written communication could be a student newspaper, particularily if it could be scheduled to arrive at "down-time" (Orton, 1979). Letters to inform students of changes or latest developments in their fields, sent either by the educational institution, or by the professional association, are also a means of communicating with students removed from campus life.

Role Of Peers And Significant Others

Peer tutors are students who themselves have completed the course content with good standing and, willingly for a small renumeration, act as a facilitator to another student. Lambeth (1983) reports that in a self-directed modularized nursing program at Mohawk College, peer tutors function effectively. The greatest difficulty may be in allaying faculty fears that peer tutors will take away from faculty roles. (Coldeway, 1980).

An informal student network can also provide necessary support. Provision of a class list and an alumni list will give the student an opportunity to seek others who are or have been in the program.

Encouragement and emotional support is essential if learning is to continue. One of the strongest supportive mechanisms may be the individual's own family. "I believe that, no matter how intensely an individual may want to learn, he or she usually does not do so very actively if the marriage partner objects" (Houle, 1961, p. 42-43).

Counselling Services

In spite of the fact that the tutor in distance learning programs accepts both instructional and counselling roles, General Counselling Services remain an essential component of distance learning institutions. For example, prior to commencing studies, a student may obtain assistance in career and vocational planning. The counselling service can also assist with the development of effective study skills.

The distance learner needs to know how to utilize resources at hand most effectively, including the use of the textbook and other print materials. Study skills workshops could be conducted. The counselling department could also prepare a Study Skills Manual, audio and video tape presentations, or computer assisted programs.

Cognitive mapping is an essential component of individualized learning. (Lambeth, 1983). Knowledge of the learners learning style, gives both learner and tutor an indication of the most effective approaches to learning. However, Tough (1964) reports that "people learn quite effectively from material alone when given a fair amount of freedom to adapt the materials to their own style of learning" (p. 20).

Reasons for Non-Completion of Distance Learning Courses

Rikkedal (1982) reported that the main reasons for discontinuation in a distance learning program were: lack of time, job required too much time, transfered to another type of school work, changed career plans, economic difficulties, illness and unsatisfactory study and living conditions.

Age correlated positively with persistence. Those over 27 performed better.

The level of previous education was positively correlated with succcess. Completion of a previous correspondence course was the best predictor of success. However, the student was at a disadvantage if he was out of school for some time. Woodley (1982) reports that a good grade in a prior course reduces the chances of drop-out in a subsequent course. Workload alone does not affect drop-out but the longer a student is enrolled in a course, the greater the risk of drop-out.

Rikkedal's subjects also had difficulty in commencing courses in Spring and in December. The discontinuation seemed to peak in April and July.

Measurement of Completion and Non-Completion

Although accurate comparison between students enrolled in traditional courses and distant learning courses is difficult, it is generally agreed by those

involved in distance education that attrition rates are indeed higher in distance learning and constitute a concern. (Duby & Giltrous, 1978; Orton, 1977).

Understanding attrition rates is further complicated by the fact that there are different methods of calculating these, resulting in considerable variations in the results.

Coldeway & Spencer (1980) describe the two most common formulas:

1. Total enrollment formula =

$$\frac{\text{course completion}}{\text{total enrollment}} \times 100$$

2. National University Extension (NUEA Formula)

$$\frac{\text{course completion}}{\text{total enrollment - total non-starts}} \times 100$$

The NUEA formula gives a higher completion rate, but the problem is in defining non-starters. A non-starter according to Orton (1977) is one who cancelled a course before submitting assignments. This definition can be complicated when courses have no assignments or when assignments are a component of the latter part of the course. Some individuals do not take the time to cancel a course or may not know the procedures for cancellation.

Rates can also be influenced by the time of calculations. Coldeway & Spencer (1980) report that students who complete courses take longer than the time allotted, indicating that completion rates calculated at the end of the trimester, would not be accurate. This situation is further complicated when there is continuous registration. The waiting period for all students to complete could make the statistics irrelevant.

To avoid problems associated with use of the formula, methods for predicting completion rates have been developed, such as the "on track" prediction method. Coldeway & Spencer (1980) define "On track as a function of the total number of students enrolled minus the total completed plus those withdrawn. The function suggested is applied to this total and uses rate to determine function results" (p. 8). An institution often recommends that learners complete courses at a certain rate.

This method of measurement also suffers from disadvantages. Learners can be sporadic in their

performance rate. It is also difficult to establish validity when prediction is variable.

Rates of completion alone are not significant indicators of the quality or the success of programming. Many students withdraw due to competing demands, totally unrelated to program quality. Others who do not complete may feel success because they temporarily participated in the program.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the method used in conducting this study. It includes a description of the instrumentation as well as the methodology used to complete the study.

Instrumentation

From a review of the literature on questionnaire design and use, advantages and disadvantages of a mail-out questionnaire were considered. The decision to use a mail-out questionnaire was based on the following advantages:

1. Compared to other methods of data collecting, it is relatively low cost.
2. Providing one has the correct address, it is relatively easy to establish contact.
3. Questionnaires are suitable for large samples.
4. They are suitable for large geographic areas.

5. They are easy for respondents to complete.

6. They take less time to complete than other data gathering methods such as interviews.

Questionnaires do have limitations as well. Some of the limitations are:

1. There is the potential danger of a low response rate.

2. The questions may lack reliability and validity.

3. Some people have a personal bias against questionnaires.

4. There is no assurance that the questions were indeed answered by the individual for which they were intended.

5. The order of completion of questions could influence responses.

Nevertheless, even with these limitations, a Questionnaire was constructed by the investigator, utilizing suggestions as stated by Berdie and Anderson (1974). The questionnaire was designed to collect the following types of data: personal information; educational experiences and intentions prior to

registering in the program; satisfaction with course content, the delivery system and services provided by staff; support systems used; and reasons for not continuing in the program.

In addition, a personal data sheet on each respondent was compiled from the records available at Grant MacEwan Community College. In order that personal data could be matched with the questionnaire, each questionnaire was coded.

Assumptions

Several assumptions underly the data gathering portion of the study. First, it was assumed that the research questionnaire used to collect data for analyses was reliable and valid.

The second underlying assumption was that those who completed the questionnaire were representative of the entire population.

The third assumption was that respondents would accurately report their views and opinions.

Population

The population for the study consisted of all the individuals who enrolled in the Extended Care

Nursing Certificate Program between May 1980 and June 1982, but who did not re-register in subsequent courses between September 1982 and February 1983. The population consisted of 137 participants residing throughout Canada.

The Sample

The sample consisted of 70 individuals who returned the completed questionnaire.

Validation

To ensure content validity, the items of the questionnaire were reviewed by four staff members at Grant MacEwan Community College. These individuals were asked to:

1. criticize any aspect of question format and instruction which would decrease clarity.
2. give suggestions for adding, changing, regrouping or deleting items.
3. record the time required to complete the questionnaire.

Based on the suggestions of the validation group, questions were rewritten, removed and regrouped, and

submitted for scrutiny by the researcher's thesis committee chairman.

Collection of Data

The research instrument accompanied by a covering letter and a self-addressed stamped envelope, was mailed on May 12, 1983 to the 137 individuals who comprised the research population. The number of completed questionnaires returned from this initial contact was 41.

On June 22, 1983, a follow-up letter was mailed to the individuals who did not initially respond. This procedure produced a return of 29 questionnaires, increasing the total return to 70 or a return of 51%. The questionnaire, accompanying letter and follow-up letter are contained in Appendix A, page 116. A total of 13 questionnaires were returned by the post office indicating that the individuals had moved and no forwarding address was available. Data collection was completed on August 15, 1983.

Data Analyses

The data were analyzed with the assistance of the personnel of the Research, Development and Evaluation Department of Grant MacEwan Community College using the Condescriptive Procedure in the Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and the University of Alberta Amdahl Computer. Respondents comments obtained in Question 26 of the questionnaire are contained in Appendix B, page 126.

Analyses of data included cross tabulation of variables, however, the results are not included since significant differences were not found.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the development and validation of the instrument, and the assumptions related to the research. The population and sample were described. A discussion of the data collection and analyses procedure concluded this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSES OF DATA

This chapter presents data that were obtained from both the student records and the completed questionnaires of the 70 respondents.

Data gathered from the records were: age, location of residence, educational preparation prior to entry into the program, and course completion status.

It will be recalled from Chapter III that the research instrument was designed to collect the following types of data on each participant: personal information; educational experiences and intentions prior to registering in the program; satisfaction with course content; the delivery system and services provided by staff; support systems used and reasons for not continuing in the program.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Geographic Location

A review of Table 1 indicates that 75.7% of respondents were Alberta residents with 25.7% of this group residing within the immediate Edmonton area. The percentage of out of province students in the responding group was 24.3%, with distribution from coast to coast.

TABLE 1

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION (N = 70)

Location	Frequency	Percentage
Edmonton	18	25.7
Alberta	35	50.0
Other Provinces	17	24.3

Sex

All participants in the study were female.

Age of Respondents

The age of each participant at the time the study was conducted is presented in Table 2. The age

range was found to be 35 years (60-25). The median age was 42 years.

TABLE 2

AGE AT TIME OF RESPONSE (N = 70)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
25 - 29	6	8.6
30 - 34	10	14.3
35 - 39	14	20.0
40 - 44	17	24.3
45 - 49	9	12.9
50 - 54	6	8.6
55 - 59	7	10.0
60 - 64	1	1.4

Student Status

Table 3 shows that half the respondents completed at least one course of the program. The data further indicates that 15.7% completed 2 courses and 2.9% completed three courses. The percentage of respondents who showed evidence of commencement of a course by submitting at least one assignment but who did not complete the course, was 2.9%. The remaining 28.6% registered in the program and showed no evidence of commencement.

TABLE 3

STUDENT STATUS (N = 70)

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Registered only	20	28.6
Commenced	2	2.9
Completed 1 course	35	50.0
Completed 2 courses	11	15.9
Completed 3 courses	2	2.9

Educational Preparation

It will be recalled from Chapter 1, that all participants are registered nurses. In addition, 10% of the students had a baccalaureate degree when they enrolled in the program.

TABLE 4

EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION (N = 70)

Education	Frequency	Percentage
R. N. plus baccalaureate	7	10
R. N.	63	90

Number Of People Living In Household

Respondents were asked to state the number of people, excluding themselves, living in their household at the time of enrollment in the program. Twenty-nine people had children age 5 years and under, 16 had children in the age range of 6 to 12 years and 23 had children between 13 and 18 years of age. Thirteen respondents had residents who were 19 to 30 years of age, 40 reported people in the 31 to 60 age group and 4 individuals had seniors over the age of 60 years in their household. Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 describe the number of individuals in each age category.

TABLE 5

AGE 5 YEARS AND UNDER (N = 29)

Number of Children	Frequency	Relative Percentage	Adjusted Percentage
1	14	20.0	48.3
2	6	8.6	20.7
3	6	8.6	20.7
4	2	2.9	6.9
5	1	1.4	3.4

TABLE 6

AGE 6 TO 12 YEARS (N = 16)

Number of Children	Frequency	Relative Percentage	Adjusted Percentage
1	12	17.1	75.0
2	4	5.7	25.0

TABLE 7

AGE 13 TO 18 YEARS (N = 23)

Number of Children	Frequency	Relative Percentage	Adjusted Percentage
1	13	18.6	56.3
2	8	11.4	34.8
3	2	2.9	8.7

TABLE 8

AGE 19 TO 30 YEARS (N = 13)

Number of Individuals	Frequency	Relative Percentage	Adjusted Percentage
1	7	10.0	53.8
2	4	5.7	30.8
3	2	2.9	15.4

TABLE 9

AGE 31 TO 60 YEARS (N = 40)

Number of People	Frequency	Relative Percentage	Adjusted Percentage
1	38	54.3	54.3
2	2	2.9	2.9

TABLE 10

PEOPLE OVER 60 YEARS (N = 4)

Number of People	Frequency	Relative Percentage	Adjusted Percentage
1	4	5.7	100.0

The size of the households ranged from no additional members (3 participants) to seven members (1 participant). Data in Table 11 show the total number of residents in each household, excluding the respondent.

TABLE 11

NUMBER OF RESIDENTS PER HOUSEHOLD

EXCLUDING RESPONDENT (N = 70)

Number of People	Frequency	Percentage
0	3	4.3
1	21	31.3
2	8	11.4
3	23	32.9
4	6	8.6
5	7	10.4
6	1	1.5
7	1	1.5

Employment While Enrolled In Program

The majority of respondents were employed outside the home during the time they were enrolled in the program. Those working full time accounted for 64.7% of the respondents and 26.5% indicated that they were employed part time. Six individuals (8.8%) were not employed.

TABLE 12

EMPLOYMENT WHILE ENROLLED (N = 68)

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Full-time	44	64.7
Part-time	18	26.5
Nil	6	8.8

Type of Employment Facility

This question attempted to identify the type of health care facility the respondents were employed by.

Active treatment hospitals were reported as a place of employment by 22.2% of the respondents. The health care facility employing the largest group of individuals (47.6%) was the extended care hospital. Nurses employed by community health agencies comprised 17.5% of the group while 1.6% worked for an educational institution. Other health care areas of employment were reported by 11.1%.

TABLE 13

TYPE OF INSTITUTIONS WORKED FOR (N = 63)

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Active Treatment	14	22.2
Extended Care	30	47.6
Community Nursing	11	17.5
Educational Institution	1	1.6
Other	7	11.1

Type of Work Done

This question was related to the question regarding the type of institutions the respondents worked in. The intent was to identify the primary role of the respondent within the institution identified in the aforementioned question.

The majority of respondents were involved in direct patient care (54%), while another 23.8% indicated that they had occassionally had another role such as supervision or teaching combined with direct patient care. Table 14 shows that there were 7.9% in administration, 6.3% in supervisory roles and 1.6% in teaching.

TABLE 14

TYPE OF WORK DONE (N = 63)

Type of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Direct Care	34	54.0
Direct Care and Other	15	23.8
Supervision	4	6.3
Teaching	1	1.6
Administration	5	7.9
Not Employed in Health Care Setting	4	6.3

PRE-REGISTERATION EXPERIENCE AND INTENT

Recency Of Participation In Learning Activities

The first question of the questionnaire identified the respondent's participation in learning activities prior to enrolling in the program. Respondents could check more than one type of participation. There were, however, 29% who had indicated that this was the first course they had taken in years. The respondents who had taken a credit course in the last 5 years comprised 24% of the group,

while 33% indicated that they had participated in workshops in the past year. A smaller group, 11% of the respondents, had taken classes in leisure type activities. There were no additional categories derived from the open ended part of the question.

Intent To Complete Program

This question was designed to identify whether the participants had intended to complete the entire program when they registered in the first course. The greatest number of respondents (52.2%), indicated that they had intended to complete the entire program when they first registered. Those not intending to complete the program comprised 7.2% of the total group, while 40.6% indicated uncertainty in plans for completion.

TABLE 15

INTENT TO COMPLETE PROGRAM DONE (N = 63)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	36	52.2
No	5	7.2
Uncertain	28	40.6

Provider Of Greatest Support To Decision To Enroll

Significant others can play an important role in decision making. The intent of this question was to identify who provided the greatest supportive inspiration to the respondents when they made their decision to enroll. Immediate family members were named by 19.1% of the respondents as providing the greatest support while 5.9% indicated that a friend or relative inspired them. A total of 9 individuals or 13.2% of the respondents credited other learners with providing this inspiration and 19.1% stated that individuals actively involved in health care influenced them. One individual listed a counsellor as providing supportive inspiration to enroll. The largest category of individuals, 36.8%, appeared to have made the decision on their own with no supportive inspiration from anyone. Two respondents specified that the proposed construction of new health care complexes influenced their decision to enroll, while one individual was influenced by the fact that her work assignment would include working with geriatric clients.

TABLE 16

GREATEST SUPPORTIVE INSPIRATION (N = 68)

Relationship	Frequency	Percentage
Immediate Family Member	13	19.1
Fellow learner	9	13.2
Friend or Relative	4	5.9
Individual Actively Involved in Health Care	13	19.1
Counsellor	1	1.5
No One	25	36.8
Other	3	4.3

Reasons For Registering In Program

The majority of respondents (82.4%) registered in the program because they felt that courses would help them provide better care for their patients. Having the opportunity to continue employment while taking a course influenced 77.3% of the respondents. Most respondents did not feel that encouragement from employers or friends had any influence on their decision to enroll in the program.

In the open ended category, ten individuals chose to take the program because of a personal interest in gerontology and extended care nursing. Five individuals saw the program as a way of returning to learning. Two other individuals specifically looked forward to a student environment and contact with other students. One individual registered in the program because she was interested in rehabilitation nursing, but realized only after registration that rehabilitation was a small component of the total program.

TABLE 17A

REASONS FOR REGISTERING IN PROGRAM

MAJOR INFLUENCE			
Reasons	N	Frequency	Percentage
1. Enjoy self study	64	23	35.9
2. Provide better care	68	56	82.4
3. Continue job	66	51	77.3
4. Future employment	66	29	43.9
5. Advancement	62	19	30.6
6. Employer recommended	56	3	5.4
7. Friend encouraged	58	1	1.7

TABLE 17B

REASONS FOR REGISTERING IN PROGRAM

SOME INFLUENCE			
Reasons	N	Frequency	Percentage
1. Enjoy self study	64	32	50.0
2. Provide better care	68	11	16.2
3. Continue job	66	11	16.7
4. Future employment	66	24	36.4
5. Advancement	62	24	38.7
6. Employer recommended	56	3	5.4
7. Friend encouraged	58	10	17.2

TABLE 17C

REASONS FOR REGISTERING IN PROGRAM

NO INFLUENCE			
Reasons	N	Frequency	Percentage
1. Enjoy self study	64	9	14.1
2. Provide better care	68	1	1.5
3. Continue job	66	4	6.1
4. Future employment	66	13	19.7
5. Advancement	62	19	30.6
6. Employer recommended	56	50	89.3
7. Friend encouraged	58	47	81.0

Necessary Change In Routine

In order to be able to take a course in the program, 47.8% of the respondents had to reorganize their household responsibilities. Six individuals, or 9.0% reduced their involvement in community activities while 4.5% had to reduce the hours of work outside the home. None of the respondents required child care arrangements and 26.9% indicated that no changes were necessary. The following reasons were given by the 8 respondents (11.9%) who chose "other" as a category:

> Had to use leisure time to study on a regular basis.
>
> Would have had to reduce family time-not prepared to do that at this time.
>
> Took holidays to accommodate heavier workload but materials were delayed in shipment so could not take course.
>
> Less leisure.
>
> Had to use all spare time because I work full time. Little time left for family.
>
> Did less entertaining for husband's colleagues.
>
> Forfieted family outings. Family went without me.
>
> Required self-discipline.

TABLE 18

MAJOR CHANGE NECESSARY (N = 67)

Change	Frequency	Percentage
Reduce Community Work	6	9.0
Reorganize Household	32	47.8
Reduce Working Hours	3	4.5
No Change	18	26.9
Other	8	11.9

SATISFACTION WITH COURSE CONTENT, DELIVERY SYSTEM AND STAFF

Description Of Course Content

The majority of respondents felt that the initial course description they received, accurately described the actual course content. There were 64.7% who rated the description accurate and 19.1% who rated the description very accurate for a total of 83.8%. Two respondents, or 2.9% felt that the course description was inaccurate. Of the two who indicated inaccuracies, one expected more content in

rehabilitation nursing while the other responded to an advertisement in a professional journal and did not note that there was more than one course in the program.

TABLE 19

ACCURACY OF COURSE DESCRIPTION (N = 68)

Level of Accuracy	Frequency	Percentage
Very Accurate	13	19.1
Accurate	44	64.7
Somewhat Accurate	9	13.2
Inaccurate	2	2.9

Amount of Content

Fifty-six respondents or 83.6% of the total responding felt that the course content consisted of a reasonable amount of material. Eight respondents (11.9%) indicated that there was too much material. Only one individual felt that too little material was covered. Two respondents who chose other as a category stated that the level of the material was too simple.

TABLE 20

AMOUNT OF CONTENT (N = 67)

Amount	Frequency	Percentage
Too Much Material	8	11.9
Reasonable Amount	56	83.6
Too Little Material	1	1.5
Other	2	3.0

Course Content Appeal

Ninety-one percent of the respondents found the course interesting or very interesting. Six respondents (9.0%) indicated that the course content was not too interesting.

TABLE 21

COURSE CONTENT INTERESTING (N = 67)

Level of Interest	Frequency	Percentage
Very Interesting	26	38.8
Interesting	35	52.2
Not Too Interesting	6	9.0
Not At All Interesting	0	0

Amount Of New Material

The intent of this question was to identify whether respondents felt that course content consisted of new material or whether the content was known to them prior to taking a course. Fifteen respondents (22.4%) felt that the content was mostly new material and 44 respondents (65.7%) indicated that there was some new material. Eight individuals (12%) felt that there was little or no new material presented.

TABLE 22

AMOUNT OF NEW MATERIAL (N = 67)

Level of Material	Frequency	Percentage
Mostly New Material	15	22.4
Some New Material	44	65.7
Little New Material	6	9.0
No New Material	2	3.0

Relevance Of Content To Job

The majority of the respondents (63.1%) found the course(s) they took to be either relevant or very relevant to their professional responsibilities. There

were 30.8% of the group who indicated that the content was somewhat relevant and 6.2% who felt that there was no relevance between content and professional responsibilities.

TABLE 23

RELEVANCE OF CONTENT (N = 65)

Degree of Relevance	Frequency	Percentage
Very Relevant	21	32.3
Relevant	20	30.8
Somewhat Relevant	20	30.8
Not At All Relevant	4	6.2

Difficulty In Understanding Course Materials

The purpose of this question was to identify the degree of difficulty experienced by the respondents in understanding course material. The majority (55.4%) indicated that they occassionally experienced difficulty in understanding course material while 3.1% stated that they often had difficulty. Those experiencing no difficulty comprised 41.5% of the group.

TABLE 24

DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING MATERIAL (N = 65)

Frequency of Difficulty	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	0	0.0
Often	2	3.1
Occassionally	36	55.4
Not At All	27	41.5

Textbook Rating

The majority of respondents felt that the textbooks used in the program were informative (60.9%) or very informative (32.8%). Those who felt that the textbooks were only somewhat informative consisted of 6.3% of the respondent.

TABLE 25

TEXTBOOK RATING (N = 64)

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Very Informative	21	32.8
Informative	39	60.9
Somewhat Informative	4	6.3

Program Aspects Causing Worry Or Concern

During the learning process, every student partakes in specific, related activities. The purpose of this question was to identify which program activities caused worry or concern and the degree of this concern.

Completing the course in the time frame given was listed as a major concern by 53% of the respondents. A further 31.8% indicated that this factor did cause some concern. Ranking second in order of concern was the completion of assignemnts, which was rated as a major concern by 28.6% and somewhat of a concern by 52.4% of the group. Of no concern to the majority of students were the registration procedure (86.7%), contacting the tutor (79.3%), receiving marks (61.4%) and preparing for exams (51.0%).

Respondents also had an opportunity to deecribe any other aspect of the program which caused them concern, and was not listed in the questionnaire. The responses received to this open-ended question follow.

Felt restricted when answering questions. Had to answer using exact words marked down if expanded beyond tutors words. -- Too childish.

Had not previously studied in English language. Had not studied in past 20 years. Felt nervous about not understanding material.

Lack of incentive due to home study learning.

Upset with late materials. -- Like to do things properly or not at all.

Finding clients for assignments - major concern.

Didn't realize it was one part of 7 course certificate program till I received course outline after enrollment.

Could not arrange time to take 732. Simply cannot study via "packaged course".

Unsure of detail expected on assignments until first few were marked and returned.

Did not know that textbooks were over and above the cost of the course. Not knowing where to obtain information about British Columbia services to elderly. Making contacts for patient assignments.

Course materials late. Extensions inconvenient because took 2 weeks holidays to get a good start on program.

Enjoyed previous group interaction (of traditional classroom format) it was an outing and an evening I enjoyed and gained knowledge.

Not enough time was allowed for contact with client in community.

Could not understand some of the assignments in NE.731.

Confused for a while. Did detailed notes. Expected them to be real. Disappointed only summaries included in assignments.

Material late in arriving - meant reorganization of plans.

Delay in return of assignments interrupted study schedule.

NE.730 answers expected were exact repetition of what was stated. Didn't like just rewriting what was written.

Finding clients for assignments.

Course did not arrive in January - arrived in spring -- had to leave it till fall (was on first run of course).

Family pressures -- no time.

Obtaining clients in community - felt I added to their burden.

Late delay modules - causing delay.

Of the 23 who responded to the open-ended question, 6 (26.9%) had a concern related to study habits or study methods, 6 (26.9%) were upset by the delay in arrival of study materials and assignments, and 5 (21.7%) had concerns regarding obtaining clients or completing client assignments.

TABLE 26

PROGRAM ASPECTS CAUSING CONCERN

MAJOR CONCERN			
Reasons	N	Frequency	Percentage
1. Registration procedure	60	1	1.7
2. Completing assignments	63	18	28.6
3. Completing readings	61	10	16.4
4. Preparing for exams	49	8	16.3
5. Writing exams	48	10	20.8
6. Receiving marks	57	2	3.5
7. Contacting tutor	58	4	6.9
8. Completing course in time frame allotted	66	35	53.0

TABLE 26B

PROGRAM ASPECTS CAUSING CONCERN

SOME CONCERN			
Reasons	N	Frequency	Percentage
1. Registration procedure	60	7	11.7
2. Completing assignments	63	33	52.4
3. Completing readings	61	30	49.2
4. Preparing for exams	49	16	32.7
5. Writing exams	48	15	31.3
6. Receiving marks	57	20	35.1
7. Contacting tutor	58	8	13.8
8. Completing course in time frame allotted	66	21	31.8

TABLE 26C

PROGRAM APECTS CAUSING CONCERN

NO CONCERN			
Reasons	N	Frequency	Percentage
1. Registration procedure	60	52	86.7
2. Completing assignments	63	12	19.0
3. Completing readings	61	21	34.4
4. Preparing for exams	49	25	51.0
5. Writing exams	48	23	47.9
6. Receiving marks	57	35	61.4
7. Contacting tutor	58	46	79.3
8. Completing course in time frame allotted	66	10	15.2

Information Provided By College Personnel

The purpose of this question was to determine the respondents satisfaction with information received from personnel at Grant MacEwan Community College. The majority, 52.3%, felt that they received the kind and amount of information they needed at all times, while 43.1% felt that they received information most of the time. Two respondents (3.1%) answered that sometimes they received the information they needed, while one respondent (1.5%) indicated that she did not received necessary information from College staff.

TABLE 27

SATISFACTION WITH INFORMATION FROM COLLEGE STAFF

(N = 65)

Degree of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
All the time	34	52.3
Most of the time	28	43.1
Sometime	2	3.1
Not At All	1	1.5

The most helpful information received from Grant MacEwan Community College staff as perceived by 36.3% of the respondents was the comments on

assignments submitted while another 24.1% rated comments of encouragement, as the most helpful information received. Registration procedures were rated as the most helpful information received by 12.1%, explanation of different concepts was chosen by 8.6%. Of importance to fewer respondents were: suggestions for additional reference material (4.3%); information about obtaining course material (3%); and feedback on exams (6.9%). Two individuals (3.4%) listed the following as being most helpful:

> Alternate ways to complete the course, i.e. lengthening time frame.
>
> Meeting and chatting with instructor at a seminar.

TABLE 28

MOST HELPFUL INFORMATION RECEIVED (N = 58)

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Registration procedures	7	12.1
Additional reference material	3	5.2
How to obtain course material	2	3.4
Explanation of difficult concepts	5	8.6
Information about exams	0	0.0
Comments of encouragement	14	24.1
Comments on assignments	21	36.2
Feedback on exams	4	6.9
Other	2	3.4

Information Not Available

Respondents were asked to identify any information not available to them. The following responses were received:

> Information (in course materials) was for Alberta. I had to obtain my own information about Saskatchewan and the resources available.
>
> I was not aware of time extensions available to complete course 731 until it was too late to meet that date also.
>
> Information about services in British Columbia was not available.
>
> Would not have taken program had I realized first part of course was mostly interviewing and application of nursing process.
>
> Unclear about time limit on assignments.
>
> Course content prior to paying tuition.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Assistance From Significant Others

During the time respondents were taking a course, others may have assisted them by listening, giving suggestions or offering encouragement. The source of assistance and the degree of help received is described in Table 29.

It is evident that 20.3% received much assistance from a spouse while 40.7% received no assistance and 1.4% felt discouragement rather than assistance.

Eight percent of the respondents indicated that they received much assistance from a parent while 78% received no assistance from a parent. Children provided much assistance to 3.6% of the respondents while 63.6% felt that children provided no assistance to them. A further 3.6% indicated that children discouraged them rather than assisted them.

Supervisors were rated as providing much assistance by 8.5% but 52.5% felt they provided no assistance and 1.7% sensed discouragement from the supervisor.

Friends provided much assistance to 11.5% and no assistance to 44.3%.

Another individual taking the same course was a source of assistance to 14.5% while 41.8% felt they received no assistance from such an individual.

Co-workers provided much assistance to 8.6% but no assistance to 44.8%. Five individuals identified clients/patients as a source of much encouragement.

TABLE 29A

ASSISTANCE FROM SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

	MUCH ASSISTANCE		
	N	Frequency	Percentage
Spouse	59	12	20.3
Parent	50	4	8.0
Child	55	2	3.6
Supervisor	59	5	8.5
Friend	61	7	11.5
Classmate	55	8	14.5
Co-worker	58	5	8.6
Other	13	5	38.5

TABLE 29B

ASSISTANCE FROM SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

SOME ASSISTANCE			
	N	Frequency	Percentage
Spouse	59	22	37.3
Parent	50	7	14.0
Child	55	16	29.1
Supervisor	59	22	37.3
Friend	61	27	44.3
Classmate	55	24	43.6
Co-worker	58	27	46.6
Other	13	1	7.7

TABLE 29C

ASSISTANCE FROM SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

NO ASSISTANCE			
	N	Frequency	Percentage
Spouse	59	24	40.1
Parent	50	39	78.0
Child	55	35	63.6
Supervisor	59	31	52.5
Friend	61	27	44.3
Classmate	55	23	41.8
Co-worker	58	26	44.8
Other	13	7	53.8

TABLE 29D

ASSISTANCE FROM SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

DISCOURAGED			
	N	Frequency	Percentage
Spouse	59	1	1.4
Parent	50		
Child	55	2	3.6
Supervisor	59	1	1.7
Friend	61		
Classmate	55		
Co-worker	58		
Other	13		

Interaction With Other Students

Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they interacted with other students in their program. One individual (1.6%) interacted very often with other students, 11.1% indicated they interacted often and 35.7% interacted occassionally. Those not interacting at all with other students comprised 47.6% of the respondents.

TABLE 30

INTERACTION WITH OTHER STUDENTS (N = 63)

Category	Frequency (Absolute)	Percentage (Adjusted Frequency
Very Often	1	1.6
Often	7	11.1
Occassionally	25	39.7
Not At All	30	47.6

Intent To Continue In Program

The respondents, all were inactive in the program for at least a year. They were asked whether they planned to enroll in another course in the Program. An affirmative response was chosen by 18.5% and 32.3% indicated that they would very likely re-enroll. Thus, a total of 50.8% intended to continue in the program. Those not likely to enroll in another course comprised 38.5% while 10.8% indicated that they would not enroll again.

TABLE 31

INTENT TO ENROLL IN ANOTHER COURSE (N = 65)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	18.5
Very likely	21	32.3
Not likely	25	38.5
No	7	10.8

Those who planned to enroll in another course were asked to state the month in which they would prefer to commence a course.

The data in Table 32 show the majority who responded to this question (79.3%) prefer a September, October or fall start date. Those who would prefer to commence a course in January comprised 20.7% of those responding. When given a second choice for commencement of a course, the following responses were received: January 72%, September 8%, October 4%, and February 4%.

TABLE 32

PREFERRED COMMENCEMENT (N = 29)

Time	Frequency	Percentage
September	17	58.62
Fall	3	10.34
October	3	10.34
January	6	20.70

TABLE 33

ALTERNATE COMMENCEMENT CHOICE (N = 25)

Time Period	Frequency	Percentage
January	18	72.0
September	3	12.0
October	2	8.0
Spring	1	4.0
February	1	4.0

REASONS FOR NOT CONTINUING IN PROGRAM

Respondents were asked to rate reasons for not continuing in the program according to whether these factors had a major influence, some influence, or no influence on the decision to continue. The highest percentage of respondents (49.2%) chose "lack of time" as the major reason while the second highest (23.1%) said that they were unable to get down to studying. The speed with which assignments were returned (1.9%), the difficulty of the course (2.0%) or the cost of the course (3.7%) was not a major influence for most respondents.

Respondents were also asked to list the one reason which had the most influence in their decision not to continue in the program. Lack of time was listed as the reason by the majority (41.0%). Other reasons than the ones listed in Table 34A which were cited were:

Moved to community with College. Plan to continue studies there

Not recognized as credit course towards degree (2 respondents)

Not recognized by RNABC

Putting energy into looking for a job. Enrolled in a college program other than nursing.

TABLE 34A

REASONS FOR NOT CONTINUING

MAJOR REASONS	N	Frequency	Relative Percentage	Adjusted Percentage
1. Lack of time	61	30	42.9	49.2
2. Job required too much time	53	10	14.3	18.9
3. Course content not relevant to my work	40	4	5.7	8.0
4. Personal illness	52	3	4.3	5.8
5. Course too difficult	51	1	1.4	2.0
6. Family illness	51	3	4.3	5.9
7. Not interested in the subject	51	0		0
8. Course content not interesting	50	5	7.1	9.8
9. Dislike home study	50	6	8.6	12.0
10. Unable to get down to studying	55	13	18.6	23.6
11. Took another course in nursing	54	12	17.1	22.2
12. Assignment returned too slowly	53	1	1.4	1.9
13. Course too expensive	54	2	2.9	3.7

TABLE 34B

REASONS FOR NOT CONTINUING

SOME REASONS	N	Frequency	Relative Percentage	Adjusted Percentage
1. Lack of time	61	16	22.9	26.2
2. Job required too much time	53	23	32.9	43.4
3. Course content not relevant to my work	40	12	17.1	24.0
4. Personal illness	52	7	10.0	13.5
5. Course too difficult	51	5	7.1	9.8
6. Family illness	51	8	11.4	15.7
7. Not interested in the subject	51	7	10.0	13.7
8. Course content not interesting	50	7	10.0	13.7
9. Dislike home study	50	6	8.6	12.0
10. Unable to get down to studying	55	22	31.4	40.0
11. Took another course in nursing	54	7	10.0	13.0
12. Assignment returned too slowly	53	2	2.9	3.8
13. Course too expensive	54	9	12.9	16.7

TABLE 34C

REASONS FOR NOT CONTINUING

NO REASON				
	N	Frequency	Relative Percentage	Adjusted Percentage
1. Lack of time	61	15	21.4	24.6
2. Job required too much time	53	20	28.6	37.7
3. Course content not relevant to my work	40	34	48.6	68.0
4. Personal illness	52	42	60.0	80.8
5. Course too difficult	51	45	64.3	88.2
6. Family illness	51	40	57.1	78.4
7. Not interested in the subject	51	44	62.9	86.3
8. Course content not interesting	50	39	55.7	76.5
9. Dislike home study	50	38	54.3	76.0
10. Unable to get down to studying	55	20	28.6	36.4
11. Took another course in nursing	54	35	50.0	64.8
12. Assignment returned too slowly	53	50	71.4	94.3
13. Course too expensive	54	43	61.4	79.6

Feelings About Home Study

The final question asked respondents to express their feelings about home study. The majority continue to be interested (53.0%) or enthusiastic (27.3%). Neutral feelings were expressed by 15.2% and 4.5% stated they disliked home study.

The questionnaire concluded with an open-ended question whereby respondents were invited to add any comments or suggestions related to their involvement in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program. These verbatim responses are recorded in Appendix B, page 127.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first section of this chapter presents the findings and implications of the study. This is followed by a summary, and recommendations for further study.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings based on the results presented in Chapter IV are analyzed and the resulting implications are discussed.

Personal Information

An analysis of the data obtained from the student record revealed that all respondents were female and between 25 and 60 years of age. The median age was 42 years. With an age differential of 35 years, it could be expected that there would be a high degree of individual differences within the sample of adult learners.

Three-fourths of the sample were Alberta residents with one-fourth living within the immediate Edmonton area. The majority (50%) completed one course and an additional (18.8%) completed more than one

course. The number who commenced but did not complete was low (2.9%). It can therefore be assumed that the majority had the necessary motivation and suport to complete a course but were not motivated to re-register in subsequent courses.

An analysis of the number and age of residents within each household revealed vast individual differences. Although the average number of residents per household was 2.54, three respondents had no additional household members while one had seven others residing in the same residence. Fifty-three (75.71%) had children under the age of 18. Twenty-two (31.43%) of those who had children under 18 years, had no other adults residing in the household. Forty-five (64.29%) of the sample had at least one other adult in the same household.

The majority (64.7%) of respondents were employed on a full-time basis with 47.6% in direct patient care roles in Extended Care facilities. Those not employed outside the home comprised 8.8% of the sample.

In summary, the analyses of the personal data indicates vast differences in age and number of household residents and a commonality in educational

preparation. A large number still have the responsibility of child rearing, some without the assistance of another adult. The majority have additional employment responsibilities.

Pre-Registration, Experience, Intent and Preparation

Registration in the program was the first learning experience in many years for approximately one-third of the respondents (29%). All others had participated in recent learning activities, with 24% of the group taking recent credit courses.

The majority (52.8%) intended to complete the entire program, however, almost an equal number (40.6%) enter the program with uncertainty regarding completion or with no intention of completion (7.2%).

The decision to enroll was a personal decision for 36.8%. Others actively involved in health care and fellow learners were supportive inspiration for 32.3%. Family members were providers of greatest suppport to 19.1%.

Most individuals (82.4%) entered the program because they felt that the knowledge gained would facilitate better patient care. Having the opportunity to continue employment while taking a course also

influenced a large number (77.3%). A lack of understanding of the delivery system was suspected when 2 respondents stated that they looked forward to social contacts with students. Another individual expected the first course to include greater emphasis in rehabilitation nursing.

An implication from the analysis of the question related to recent learning experiences is that because a significant number had not participated in credit type learning activities for many years, counselling services may be required to facilitate the adjustment to a learning environment. A second implication from the data presented is that individuals registering in a course do not necessarily intend to complete the program.

Satisfaction With Course Content, Delivery System and Staff

Data analyses of course content revealed that the majority of respondents felt that the course description was accurate, the course content was interesting and the amount of material covered was reasonable.

The opinion that course content consisted of mostly new materials was expressed by a small member

(22.4%). Almost two-thirds (65.7%) felt that there was some new material while 9% felt that there was little new material.

Although the majority felt that the course(s) were relevant to their job, almost one-third (30.8%) described the content as being somewhat relevant.

Slightly more than half of the respondents occasionally experienced difficulty in understanding course materials. Those experiencing no difficulty comprised 41.5% of the group. The textbooks used were considered informative by the majority.

Respondents identified two major program related concerns. They were: completing the course in the time frame given, and completing assignments. Registration procedure, contacting the tutor, and receiving marks caused no concern to the majority of students. Similarily 51% were not concerned with examinations but it should be noted that there are no examinations in the first course, the course completed by the majority of respondents.

Respondents had an opportunity to state in an open-ended question, the source of greatest concern. Those responding to this open-ended question stated

reasons which could be grouped under the following categories: study methods or habits; delay in shipment of materials and assignments; and locating clients or completing client assignments.

The respondents were generally satisfied with information received from College personnel. Comments on assignments and comments of encouragement were ranked as being most beneficial to the largest number. Two individuals stated that information about out of province resources was not provided, two were unclear about time extension and time limits on assignments and two felt they would like to know more about course content before registering. Resolving the areas of concern described by the respondents could have the effect of increasing the retention rate.

Some implication from the foregoing data are that although concerns regarding the course content and the delivery system are not significant, consideration should be given to reviewing and reducing the extent of the concern.

The issues causing the greatest concern, namely, lack of time and concern regarding assignments must be addressed with consideration for methods of reducing the associated anxiety.

Support Systems

The assistance received from significant others was low in all categories. Respondents who interacted often with other students comprised 12.7% of the total group.

Although all individuals in the sample were inactive for at least one year, approximately half indicated that they would very likely or definitely re-enroll in another course. The majority would prefer to commence courses in the fall.

The evidence of a low support mechanism would warrant thorough investigation into methods of increasing the assistance available to students in the program. Also significant, is that over half the number of students intended to enroll in another course after an absence of one year or more. Presently the entire program must be completed within 4 years. Thus, either the 4 year completion requirement will have to be waived or the students could be considered for individual course studies rather than a program of studies. The preference for a fall start date has scheduling implications.

Reasons For Not Continuing

The major reasons for not continuing in the program listed in rank order were:

lack of time
unable to get down to studying
took another course in nursing
job required too much time
dislike home study
course content not interesting
course content not relevant to work
personal and family illness (equal)
course too expensive
assignments returned too slowly

Some of the above stated reasons can be addressed by program personnel. Consideration should be given to those problems that Grant MacEwan Community College can alleviate. One must be realistic in acknowledging that some of the aforementioned problems are beyond the scope of assistance from the College. The respondent's comments and suggestions related to their involvement in the program as listed in Appendix B, page 127 should each be given careful consideration.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of Chapter V presents a summary of the study conducted, and the resulting recommendations.

The Problem

There is a group of students at Grant MacEwan Community College who have previously registered in the Extended Care Nursing Certification Program but who have not continued for at least a one year period. The purpose of the study is to identify factors associated with the non-completion of the program.

Population and Sample Of The Study

The population of the study was defined as the 137 students who registered in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program between May 1980 and June 1982 but who did not continue. The sample of the study consisted of 70 respondents who returned completed questionnaires.

Data Collection and Analyses

The major data collecting instrument was a questionnaire (Appendix A) which had been validated previously using a sample of individuals employed at

Grant MacEwan Community College as instructors and research assistant.

Information received on the completed questionnaire was analyzed using the Condescriptive Procedure in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), using the Amdahl Computer at the University of Alberta. Data were cross-tabulated to check for significant differences, however, no significant differences were found.

Generalizability

The results may be generalizable to other distance learning programs in the Health Sciences Division at Grant MacEwan Community College.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations based on the analyses of data collected are presented in this section. It will be recalled that the data collected consisted of: personal characteristics; educational experiences and intentions prior to registering in the program; satisfaction with the course content, the delivery system and the services provided by staff; support systems used; and reasons for not continuing in the program.

Personal Characteristics

The sample consisted of a group of female adult learners with a median age of 42 years. For many, it was the first formal learning experience in more than 5 years. Generally the group expressed greatest concern related to: lack of time, completion of assignments and the inability to return to studying. The majority had others living in their household. A high percentage had the responsibilities of child rearing, some without the assistance of another adult. In addition the majority were employed either on a full-time or part-time basis. It is therefore recommended that:

> STUDENTS BE APPRIZED OF THE AVAILABILITY OF EXISTING COUNSELLING SERVICES WITHIN THE COLLEGE

and that;

> COUNSELLING DEPARTMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF EXAMINE CAREFULLY THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE DISTANCE LEARNER AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO FULFILL THOSE NEEDS.

It is further recommended that:

> CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS RELATED TO TIME MANAGEMENT AND STUDY METHODS. SUCH PROGRAMS COULD BE IN THE FORM OF REGIONAL CONFERENCES, REGULAR CENTRALIZED CONFERENCES, TELECONFERENCES OR SELF-STUDY PRINT AND AUDIO-VISUAL PRESENTATIONS.

and that;

CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO EXPERIMENTING WITH ALTERNATE PACING METHODS TO ASSIST STUDENTS IN COMPLETION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS.

Pre Registration Intent

The results of this study further revealed that individuals registered in the program, do not necessarily intend to complete the program. It is recommended that:

THE STUDENT'S INTENT TO CONTINUE IN THE PROGRAM BE ESTABLISHED UPON REGISTRATION AND MONITORED WITH EACH SUBSEQUENT REGISTRATION.

This could be accomplished through instructor interview and questionnaires, and would facilitate the prediction of program completion rates.

Satisfaction With Course Content, Delivery System and Staff

Although some felt that the course content consisted of new materials, two-thirds felt that there was some new material, while a small percentage (9%) felt that there was little new material. It is therefore recommended that:

CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO HIRING AN INDEPENDENT REVIEWER WITH EXPERTISE IN THE PARTICULAR CONTENT AREA TO DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATENESS AND THE LEVEL OF CONTENT.

Also, since more than half the respondents occasionally experienced difficulty in understanding

course materials, it is recommended that;

> STUDENTS BE ENCOURAGED TO REPORT DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED, AND THAT INSTRUCTORS MAINTAIN ACCURATE RECORDS OF SUCH REPORTS. THESE REPORTS WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THOSE IN CHARGE OF THE PROGRAM.

A further recommendation is that:

> THE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BE REVIEWED BY AN INDEPENDENT REVIEWER, TO ASCERTAIN CLARITY AND READABILITY.

and that;

> THIS REVIEWER ASCERTAIN WHETHER THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT COURSE MATERIALS ASSIST THE LEARNER IN BECOMING SELF-DIRECTED, OR WHETHER SELF-DIRECTION IS EXPECTED ON ENTRY INTO THE PROGRAM.

Some respondents expressed concern regarding the delay in shipment of materials and assignments and the resulting inconvenience. It is recommended that:

> BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY, THE IMPORTANCE OF A QUICK TURN-AROUND TIME IN ASSIGNMENTS BE EMPHASIZED TO ALL STAFF INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM.

and that;

> INSTRUCTORS BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT COURSE REVISIONS WITHIN ONE MONTH OF COURSE COMPLETION, THUS, ALLOWING AMPLE TIME FOR PRINTING OF MATERIALS

and that;

> THE STUDENT BE NOTIFIED BY TELEPHONE IMMEDIATELY SHOULD ANY UNEXPECTED DELAYS OCCUR.

Approximately three-fourths of the sample live outside the immediate Edmonton area. To

accommodate delays in transport and mail services and reduce student anxiety, it is recommended that:

THE DURATION OF EACH COURSE BE EXTENDED

and that;

THE LENGTH OF EXTENSION BE ESTABLISHED FOLLOWING ANALYSES OF DATA ON THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE A COURSE.

Support Systems

Data analyzed revealed that respondents were satisfied with their relationship with College staff. Respondents found comments on assignments particularily helpful. The assistance received from significant others was marginal. Almost one-half the respondents had not interacted with other classmates. Therefore it is recommended that:

CLASSLISTS WITH ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS CONTINUE TO BE MAILED TO REGISTRANTS AND THAT PRIORITY BE GIVEN FOR AN EARLY MAIL-OUT OF THESE LISTS.

It is advisable to continue the policy of obtaining student approval, prior to establishing a list, however, the list could be generated much earlier if the student approval was obtained by telephone. Therefore it is recommended that:

THE INSTRUCTOR ASCERTAIN ON FIRST CONTACT WITH THE STUDENT, WHETHER THE STUDENT WISHES TO BE ON A MAILING LIST.

It is further recommended that:

> INSTRUCTORS MAINTAIN REGULAR CONTACT WITH STUDENTS, PROVIDING A SUPPORTIVE AND POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

and that;

> THE PROGRAM EXPERIMENT WITH THE USE OF PEER COUNSELLING AND THE USE OF ALUMNI GROUPS AS ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS.

Reasons For Not Continuing In The Program

Respondents submitted their reasons for not continuing in the program at the present time, however, it is also significant to note that one-half of the sample intended to continue at a later date. Present College policies state that the program must be completed within four years. It is therefore recommended that:

> THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION CONSIDER THE FEASIBILITY OF GRANTING AN EXTENSION TO THE 4 YEAR COMPLETION PERIOD. SUCH A DECISION WOULD BE BASED ON A THOROUGH ANALYSES OF THE REVISIONS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS AND THE AMOUNT OF NEW INFORMATION INCORPORATED.

It is further recommended that:

> PROVISION FOR UP-DATE COURSES AND CHALLENGE EXAMS BE CONSIDERED BEFORE DISQUALIFYING STUDENT FROM THE PROGRAM BECAUSE THE 4 YEAR TIME LIMIT WAS EXCEEDED.

Because the number of respondents wishing to return, almost equals the number who have no intention

of returning it is recommended that:

> EXIT INTERVIEWS BE CONDUCTED BY TELEPHONE TO IDENTIFY THOSE WHO INTEND TO RETURN TO THE PROGRAM AT A LATER DATE.

and that;

> COMMUNICATION WITH THOSE WHO INTEND TO CONTINUE, THROUGH NEWSLETTERS AND PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS BE MAINTAINED FOR A TWO YEAR PERIOD AND REVIEWED AT THAT TIME.

Respondents also had the opportunity to select their preference for time commencement of a course. Fall was the best time for the greatest number. Presently, one-half of the courses are scheduled in the fall trimester and one-half are scheduled in the winter trimester. It is recommended that:

> THE COLLEGE CONDUCT AN EXPERIMENT BY SCHEDULING COURSES ON AN ANNUAL BASIS, THEREBY GIVING THE STUDENT THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENCE ANY NUMBER OF COURSES AT ANY TIME.

It is recognized that this could add to the complexity of student record keeping. To facilitate the record keeping system, it is recommended that:

> THE COLLEGE COMPUTER SYSTEM BE UTILIZED.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

THAT GRANT MACEWAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE REPLICATE THIS STUDY IN THREE YEARS.

THAT A COMPARATIVE STUDY BE DONE BETWEEN STAY-INS AND DROP-OUTS IN THE EXTENDED CARE NURSING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM.

THAT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ALTERNATIVE COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES BE EXPERIMENTED WITH.

THAT EXPERIMENTATION WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INFORMAL STUDENT GROUPS BE CONDUCTED.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Berdie, D. R. and Anderson, J. F. Questionnaires: design and use. New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1974.

Briggs, D. K. Adults' recommendations for teaching/ learning strategies and andragogy. Australian Journal of Adult Education, 1982, 22 (2).

Burns, M. G. Front-end loading the self-directed learning experience. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 1980, 7 (1) 34-37.

Ceschi-Smith, M. & Waldron, M. The occupation-oriented adult learner. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 1983, 9 (1) 10-13.

Coldeway, D. O. & Spencer, R. E. An examination of tutor management strategies for uses in distance education. REDEAL Technical Report # 2, Project REDEAL, Athabasca University, 1980a.

Coldeway, D. O. & Spencer, R. E. Exploring the effects of peer tutoring in distance education. REDEAL Technical Report # 3, Project REDEAL, Athabasca University, 1980b.

Coldeway, D. O., & Spencer, R. E. The measurement attrition and completion in distance learning of course. REDEAL Technical Report # 8, Project REDEAL, Athabasca University, 1980b.

Coldeway, D. O. What does educational psychology tell us about the adult learner at a distance? In J. S. Daniel, M. A. Stroud and J. R. Thompson (Eds.), Learning at a Distance - A World Perspective. Edmonton: Athabasca University/ International Council for Correspondence Education, 1982.

Courtney, S. Factors affecting participants in adult education: an analysis of some literature. Studies In Adult Education, 1981, 13 (2), 98-111.

Crawford, G. Student completion rates under three different pacing conditions. REDEAL Technical Report # 11, Project REDEAL, Athabasca University, 1980.

Daniel, J. S., & Marquis, C. Interaction and independence: Getting the mixture right. Teaching At A Distance, 1979, (19) 29-46.

Duby, P. B., & Giltrow, D. R. Predicting student withdrawals in open learning courses. Educational Technology, 1978, 18 (2) 43-47.

Elton, I. R. B. Can the Keller plan help in our understanding of the problems of listant learning? Journal of Personalized Instruction, 1980, 4 (2), 94-99.

Fellman, A. C. A response to Borje Holmberg. The Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 1979, 6 (1), 31.

Finkel, A. Designing interesting courses. In J. S. Daniel, M. A. Stroud and J. R. Thompson (Eds.), Learning at a Distance - A World Perspective. Edmonton: Athabasca University/International Council for Correspondence Education, 1982.

Hart, M. Variables affecting adult learning projects. Adult Education, 1982, 54 (4) 349-352.

Havighurst, R.J. Developmental tasks and education. New York: McKay, 1952.

Hergenhahn, B. R. An introduction to theories of learning. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1976.

Haywood, L. Adult counselling services in post-secondary educational institutions. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 1977, 4, (1) 36-40.

Holmberg, B. Practice in distance education: A conceptual framework. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 1979, 6 (1) 18-30.

Holt, M. Designing programs for returning women students. New Directions for Experiential Learning, 1982, 16, 31-43.

Houle, C. D. The Enquiring Mind. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1961.

Houle, C. D. Continuing Learning in the Professions. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980.

Jevons, F. R. How different is the distance student? In J. S. Daniel, M. A. Stroud and J. R. Thompson (Eds.), Learning at a Distance - A World Perspective. Edmonton: Athabasca University/ International Council for Correspondence Education, 1982, 126-127.

Kidd, J. R. How adults learn-what's new. Canadian Journal of Continuing Education, 1977, 4 (1), 27-30.

Knapper, C. K., & Wasylycia-Coe, M. A. Characteristics and attitudes of correspondence students. In J. S. Daniel, M. A. Stroud and J. R. Thompson (Eds.), Learning at a Distance - A World Perspective. Edmonton: Athabasca University/ International Council for Correspondence Education, 1982.

Kneubuhler, R. Evaluation of the redeveloped nursing refresher program. Unpublished report, Grant MacEwan Community College, 1982.

Knowles, M. S. Issues in adult learning psychology. Adult Leadership, 1974, 22 (9), 315-316.

Knowles, M. S. Self-directed learning: a guide for learners and teachers. New York: Association Press, 1975.

Knowles, M. S. The modern practice of adult education: anadragogy versus pedagogy. New York: Assocation Press, 1976.

Knowles, M. S. The adult learner, a neglected species. (2nd ed.). Houston: Gulf Publishing Co., 1979.

Lambeth, D. Personal communication, April 20, 1983.

Leslie, J. D. The University of Waterloo model for distance education. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 1979, 6, (1), 33-41.

Levinson, D. J. The seasons of a man's life. New York: Ballantine Books, 1978.

Lloyd, M. E. & Jacobi, D. E. Developing self-control in self-paced classes. Journal of Personalized Instruction, 1980, 4 (2), 70-73.

MacKenzie, N., Postgate, R. C. & Scapham, J. Open learning: Systems and problems in post-secondary education, United Kingdom: Unesco Press, 1975.

Main, K. The power-load-margin formula of Howard Y. McClusky as the basis for a model of teaching. Adult Education, 1979, 30 (1), 19-33.

Manuel, D. Adult learning theory. Edmonton: Research and Development Training and Education Consultants Ltd., 1976.

Maslow, A. J. Motivation and Personality. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

McClusky, H. Y. A differential psychology of the adult potential. In M. Knowles, The Adult Learner: A neglected species, (2nd ed.). Houston: Gulf Publishing Co., 1979, 149-164.

Morgan, A., & Taylor, E. & Gibbs, G. Understanding the distance learner as a whole person. In J. S. Daniel, M. A. Stroud and J. R. Thompson (Eds.), Learning at a Distance - A World Perspective. Edmonton: Athabasca University/ International Council for Correspondence Education, 1982.

Orton, L. J. Completion and nonstart rates in correspondence courses. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 1977, 4 (1), 21-26.

Rekkedal, T. The drop-out problem and what to do about it. In J. S. Daniel, M. A. Stroud and J. R. Thompson (Eds.), Learning At A Distance - A World Perspective. Edmonton: Athabasca University/ International Council for Correspondence Education, 1982.

Rogers, C. R. Personal thoughts on teaching and learning. In M. V. Miller (Ed.). On Teaching Adults: An Anthology, Chicago: The Centre for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1960, 68-70.

Rogers, C. R. Freedom to learn. Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing, 1969.

Shale, D. G. Attrition: a case study. In J. S. Daniel, M. A. Stroud and J. R. Thompson (Eds.), Learning at a Distance - A World Perspective. Edmonton: Athabasca University/International Council for Correspondence Education, 1982.

Spencer, R. E. Investigating the use of personalized systems of construction in distance education. REDEAL Research Report # 1, Project REDEAL, Athabasca University, 1980.

Spencer, R. E., Peruniak, G. & Caldeway, D. O. A comparison between pace-packages and home-study courses with respect to completion date. REDEAL Research Report # 11, Project REDEAL, Athabasca University, 1980.

Tarnow, K. G. Working with adult learners. Nurse Educator, 1979, 4 (5) 34-40.

Tough, A. M. Learning without a teacher. Educational Research Series No. 3. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1964, 1-31.

Tough, A. M. The assistance obtained by adult self-teachers. Adult Education, 1966, 17 (3), 30-37.

Tough, A. M. Major learning efforts: recent research and future directions. Adult Education, 1978, 28, (4), 250-263.

Waniewicz, I. The adult learner: who are they, why and where do they learn? In J. S. Daniel, M. A. Stroud and J. R. Thompson (Eds.), Learning at a Distance - A World Perspective. Edmonton: Athabasca University/International Council for Correspondence Education, 1982.

Whitehead, A. N. The aims of education. New York: Mentor Books, 1964, 9.

Williams, G. L. Adults learning about learning. Adult Education, 1980, 52 (6), 386-391.

Wilson, R. G. The learning resource centre. Adult Training, 1978, 11, 71.

Woodley, A. Reducing the drop-out rate in advanced courses. In J. S. Daniel, M. A. Stroud and J. R. Thompson (Eds.), Learning at a Distance - A World Perspective. Edmonton: Athabasca University/ International Council for Correspondence Education, 1982.

APPENDIX A

THE QUESTIONNAIRE, COVERING LETTERS, AND

REMINDER LETTER

Mrs. Gerri Nakonechny,
9528 - 142 Avenue,
EDMONTON, Alberta
T5E 6A5

May 12, 1983

Dear

As a colleague in nursing, I am writing to you with a special request for a few minutes of your time to answer a few questions on the enclosed questionnaire.

Some continuing education courses in nursing, such as the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program are available through distance delivery. I have a special interest in distance education and therefore my thesis for credit towards an M. Ed. Degree is on this topic.

As a former student in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program, you are in a position to indicate which aspects of the program met your needs and which did not. Any suggestions you have for improvement of programming will be welcomed. If you are interested in the results of this survey, I would be pleased to share them with you.

Responses will remain confidential, only compiled group data will be released. The code number on your questionnaire is for follow-up purposes and should prevent you from receiving bothersome reminders.

In anticipation of your response, I thank you for your time and cooperation. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at home after 6:00 PM, collect at (403) 475-1501.

Yours truly,

GERRI NAKONECHNY, R.N.

Mrs. Gerri Nakonechny,
9528 - 142 Avenue,
EDMONTON, Alberta
T5E 6A5

June 22, 1983

Dear Colleague,

In your busy schedule you may have overlooked the questionnaire, I sent to you about four weeks ago, to obtain data for my thesis. In order that I may obtain valid results, I require your response as soon as possible.

If you have not already done so, would you be kind enough to complete the questionnaire and return it to me in the envolope I provided. In the event that the questionnaire or envelope was misplaced, please phone me collect at (403) 475-1501 (after 6:00 PM, M.S.T.) and I will sent another copy of the questionnaire to you.

Thank you for your early response.

Sincerely,

GERRI NAKONECHNY

GN/vah

EXTENDED CARE NURSING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Which of the following describe your situation immediately prior to registering in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program? (You may check more than one).

___ It was the first course I had taken in many years.

___ I had taken a credit course within the past five (5) years.

___ I had participated in a workshop in the year prior to registration.

___ In the year prior to registration, I took classes in leisure type activities (e.g. skiing, macrame, etc.)

___ Other. (Please specify) _____

_____

2. When you registered in the first course in the Extended Care Program, did you intent to complete all seven (7) courses?

___ YES ___ NO ___ UNCERTAIN

3. When you made your decision to enroll, who provided the greatest supportive inspiration? (Check one).

___ Immediate Family Member
___ Fellow Learner
___ Friend or Relative
___ Individual Actively Involved in Health Care
___ Counsellor
___ No one
___ Other (Please specify) _____

4. The following could be reasons for registering in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program. Indicate the influence each had on your decision to register (Check all applicable).
   1 = Major influence
   2 = Some influence
   3 = No influence

	Major 1	Some 2	No 3
1. I enjoy studing on my own.			
2. This course will help me provide better care for my patients.			
3. I can continue working in my job while taking the course.			
4. The course will prepare me for future employment.			
5. The course will increase my eligibility for advancement in my profession.			
6. My employer recommended I take the course.			
7. My friend encouraged me to take the course.			

State below any other reason why you decided to enroll in the program _____

5. The MAJOR change which you had to make in your routine in order to be able to take this course(s) was: (One response only).

___ Reduce involvement in community work.
___ Reorganize household tasks.
___ Locate babysitter.
___ Reduce hours of work outside the home.
___ No changes were necessary.
___ Other _____

6. The initial course description you received, described the actual course content:

___ Very accurately
___ Accurately
___ Somewhat accurately
___ Innacurately

7. Generally, the course content was:

___ Too much material
___ Reasonable amount of material
___ Too little material
___ Other (Please specify) _____

8. Overall, the course content was:

___ Very interesting
___ Interesting
___ Not too interesting
___ Not at all interesting

9. The content in the course(s) you took, covered: (check one)

___ Mostly new material
___ Some new material
___ Very little new material
___ No new material

Please specify any areas of previous familiarity

_____

10. How relevant was the content of the course(s) you took, to your present professional responsibilities?

___ Very relevant
___ Relevant
___ Somewhat relevant
___ Not at all relevant

11. Did you have any difficulty in understanding the course materials?

___ Very often
___ Often
___ Occasionally
___ Not at all

12. Generally, how would you rate the text books you used? (Check one)

___ Very informative
___ Informative
___ Somewhat informative
___ Not informative

13. What part of the program caused you work or concern? (Check the degree of concern created).
    1 = Major
    2 = Some
    3 = No

	Major 1	Some 2	No 3
1. Registration procedure.			
2. Completing assignments.			
3. Completing readings.			
4. Preparing for exams.			
5. Writing exams.			
6. Receiving marks.			
7. Contacting tutor.			
8. Completing course in time frame given.			

If another aspect of the program not mentioned caused you concern, please state. _____

14. In your contacts with personnel at Grant MacEwan Community College, either by telephone, mail or by letter, did you feel that you were getting the kind and amount of information you needed?

___ All the time
___ Most of the time
___ Some of the time
___ Not at all

15. What was the MOST helpful information you received? (Check one).

___ Information about registration procedures
___ Suggestions for additional reference material
___ Information about obtaining course materials
___ Explanation of difficult concepts
___ Information about examinations
___ Comments of encouragements
___ Comments on assignments submitted
___ Feedback on tests
___ Other (Please specify) _____

16. Identify any information that was not available. _____
_____
_____

17. During the time you were taking the course(s), others may have assisted you by listening to you, giving you suggestions, or encouraging you. Check the degree of help you received from each of the following:
1 = Much assistance
2 = Some assistance
3 = No assistance
4 = Discouraged rather than assisted

	Much 1	Some 2	No 3	Disc 4
1. Spouse				
2. Parent				
3. Child				
4. Supervisor				
5. Friend				
6. Another person taking the same course				
7. Someone who works with you				
8. Other. Give position of relationship to you -				

18. During the time that you were enrolled in the program, did you interact with other students in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program?

___ Very often
___ Often
___ Occassionally
___ Not at all

19. Do you plan to enroll in another course in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program?

___ Yes
___ Very likely
___ Not likely
___ No

If yes or very likely, state the month in which you prefer to commence a course.

_____ First Choice _____ Second Choice

20. The following could be responses for not continuing in the program. Check the most appropriate response.
1 = Major influence
2 = Some influence
3 = No influence

	Major 1	Some 2	No 3
1. Lack of time			
2. Job required too much time			
3. Course content not relevant to my work			
4. Personal illness			
5. Course too difficult			
6. Family illness			
7. Not interested in the subject			
8. Course content not interesting			
9. Dislike home study			
10. Unable to get down to studying			
11. Took another course in nursing			
12. Assignments returned too slowly			
13. Course too expensive			
14. Other			

List the one reason which had the most influence in you not continuing in the program _____

21. In each age category listed, state the number of people, other than yourself, living in your household at the time you were enrolled in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program.

___ 5 and under (NUMBER)
___ 6 - 12 (NUMBER)
___ 13 - 18 (NUMBER)
___ 19 - 30 (NUMBER)
___ 30 - 60 (NUMBER)
___ over 60 (NUMBER)

22. Were you employed outside the home at the time you were enrolled in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program? (Check one)

___ No
___ Yes, full time
___ Yes, part time or temporarily

23. If you were employed outside the home, indicate the type of institution you worked for. (Check one).

___ Active treatment hospital
___ Extended care facility
___ Community nursing
___ Educational institution
___ Not employed in health care setting
___ Other (Please specify type of institution) _____

24. Indicate the type of work you did.

___ Direct patient/client care
___ Supervision
___ Teaching
___ Administration
___ Unrelated to health care

25. Which of the following best describes how you feel about home study?

___ Enthusiastic
___ Interested
___ Neutral
___ Dislike it

26. Please add any comments or suggestions you feel are related to your involvement in the Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program that have not been previously covered.

APPENDIX B

VERBATIM RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTION NO. 26

RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTION NO. 26

Taking courses not a priority at this time. Perhaps in future when children grown up. Now nursing has very secondary role in life.

Enjoyed readings from text. Enjoyed 730. Found 731 frustrating - felt in grade 1 with materials sent and expectations.

Course material far too bulky and simplistic. Time too precious to spend on frivolous yes, no, copying out word for word.

Would like more in depth course summaries. More flexibility in answering.

Felt needed course to organize "my learning sequence".

Still interested in Extended Care Nursing and University or College education.

Thoroughly enjoyed instructors who were very sympathetic and understanding.

Would like to continue in program but through classroom study afternoons or evenings once or twice a week.

I am very much a self-directed learner. Enjoy going at own pace or off on a tangent. Knowledge and not certificate is what I'm after. Decided time required to do course not worth it. Refer to course material and use textbooks regularily.

Would have been nice to have 2-3 day workshop with group at beginning and end of course.

Hope to enroll in one or two other courses when I have more time - now family committments. Not enthusiastic about all courses. May not complete at all. Idea of correspondence excellent. Wish there were courses in emergency, maternity, etc.

Would like to finish program when resettled.

Would like to continue. Dropped out in 731 - loaded with work, volunteer and home duties.

Highly recommend home study courses for people who live in rural areas. Gives opportunity to take Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program without leaving home.

Very distressing to have to quit before completing - something I've never done before. However found content and requirement very demanding. Could not attend classes due to work schedule and packaged learning drove me to distraction.

Employed in home care and have to deal with psychiatric type problems. Interested in mental health (NE 731) but had to take NE 730 first. Because of time constraints - did not complete NE 731 but hope to do so soon.

Family was tired of me studying and wondered why I was taking another course. After a while I wondered too, so I quit.

At mercy of weather and plane schedule (Northern resident, North West Territories). When assignment has not arrived by due date - should take into consideration. First class mail took as long as 22 days.

British Columbia Nurse's Association library not helpful. Could only borrow books for 2-3 weeks at a time. Hassle finding client that would work with me.

Feel even if I got certificate - no value from hospital or Nurse's Association perspective.

Personal approach to course would have been to provide first: firm theory base through reading research and assignment. As this was introductory course, do not see beginning it through client interviews and basing marking procedure on results of interviews.

Disappointed in myself for failing to finish program.

Unhappy I did not complete course. Plan to resume in the fall.

Discouraged because I didn't complete. I asked for extension for another term and was not granted. Feel I am self motivated - completed degree in 1974, buddy assignment would have helped.

Enjoyed the 2 courses very much. Hope to get back in January 1984.

Recommend that if student currently in program, registration form should be mailed automatically with schedule of classes.

Found course most helpful to myself and clients. Have passed on information to several people.

Thoroughly enjoyed participating. I plan to continue when family committments lessen.

Concern that program is not recognized at University of Alberta. I am in dilemma whether it is worth the expense to continue in Extended Care Nursing Certificate Program. Took another course - Advanced Practical Obstetrics.

Too little involvement with instructor - distant rural student. Suggest weekend seminar, workshop.

Will have to take leave for courses which require practicum.

Remarks on assignments most helpful.

Course material not very challenging. Felt it was more suitable for student nurses not experienced RN's looking for self improvement.

Disappointed in level. Teach junior students. Course not beyond what I expect of juniors.

Course materials late. Conflicted with winter holidays. Work 140 miles from home. Many family commitments. Hope degree can be offered by correspondence.

Assignments completed - great deal repetitious reading and no consistent pattern. A few pages one chapter - then entirely new subject.

3 preschoolers and 1 grade 1 - unable to spend adequate time. Feel course content - will need to wait till family timing more appropriate.

Personality of one tutor not suited to teaching nurses

Dislike studying on own, however, convenience outweighs disadvantage.

VITA

NAME: Geraldine Marie Nakonechny

PLACE OF BIRTH: Lamont, Alberta

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1939

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND DEGREES:

University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
1955-1960 B. Sc in Nursing

HONOURS AND AWARDS:

United Commercial Travellers Nurses Scholarship
1956

Edmonton Home Economics Association Award for the Theory and Practice of Nutrition in Nursing
1959

RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE:

Nursing Instructor
University of Alberta Hospital
Edmonton, Alberta
1960-1967

Lecturer
Faculty of Nursing
University of Alberta
1967-1977

Program Head
Post-Basic Nursing Programs
Grant MacEwan Community College
1980-1983